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May, 1903

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CONTENTS

25¢

THE DECORATION OF COSTLY RESIDENCES.—(Illustrated) . . . 397

Russell Sturgis.

HOW AND WHERE TO LIVE IN PARIS
ON \$3,000 A YEAR—PART II.
(Illustrated) . . . 423

Fernand Mazade.

THE GARDEN OF "WELD."—(Illustrated) . . . 433

"AMERICAN GARDENS."—(Illustrated.) 437

Geo. F. Pentecost, Jr.

"IDLEHOUR"—THE ESTATE OF W.
K. VANDERBILT.—(Illustrated) . 455

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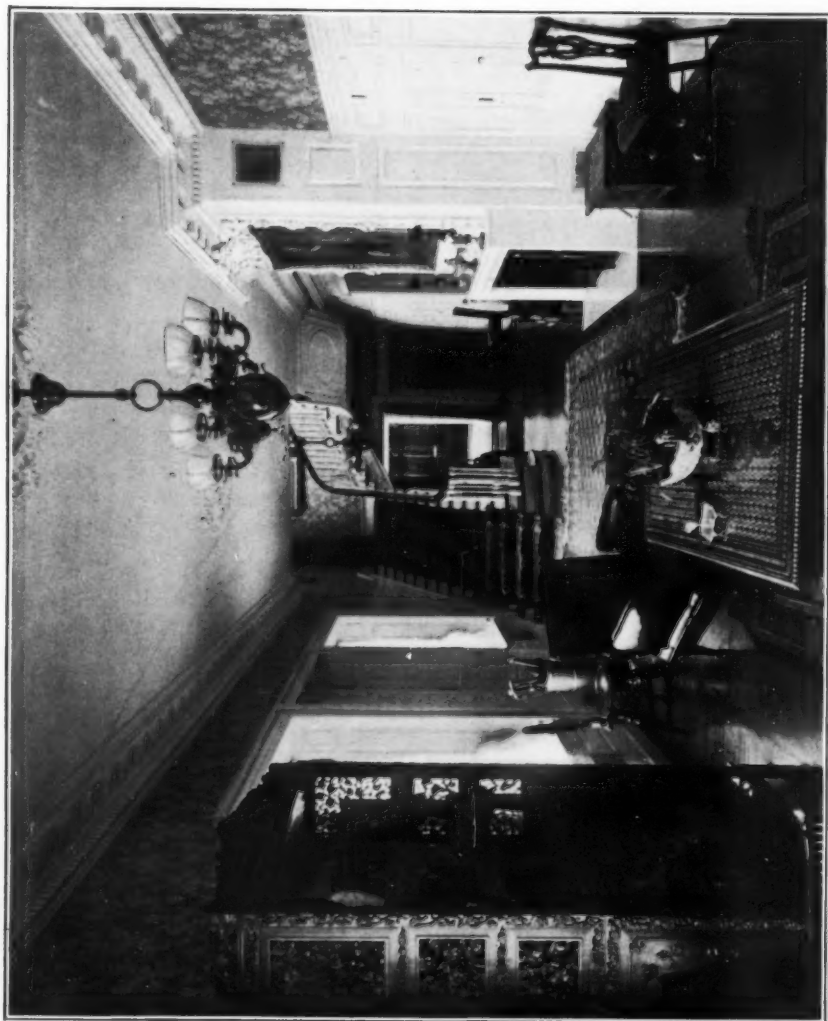


FIG. 1. HALL IN THE RESIDENCE OF ERNEST FLAGG, ESQ.

Dongan Hills, Staten Island, New York.

Ernest Flagg, Architect.

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THE DECORATION OF COSTLY RESIDENCES.

IN a modern house of any but the very greatest cost and splendor, a room is enclosed by four flat walls pierced with two or three doorways and as many windows; flat flooring and a flat roof overhead, which last will be generally the under side of an upper floor, because the rooms we have to decorate are not often at the top of the house. The walls will be always in plain common hard brick until such time as they are plastered over; or if by chance the wall on either side is a framed partition, as may still occur in our carpentry-working land, the rough and ragged surface of the lathing replaces the rough brick. Overhead there are the beams or joists of the upper floor; below there are at least the rough floor planks which have been nailed upon the beams or upon the strips which have been used to level up the surfaces. The existence of iron beams in the upper or lower floor will not be found to alter the conditions except in so far as such beams allow of a mosaic flooring or one of tiles or the like more easily and with better permanent results than the wooden structure can. As for the walls, the instances in which a constractional decoration is tried, when the wall is built or faced with more costly and more presentable material than common brick, or when cornices and surbases are built in, solid, made of permanent material like marble or terra cotta—these instances are so few that they had better be treated separately. We have, indeed, as the American problem, the standing problem of interior decoration, under the simple conditions named above, the wholly unorganized, unconsidered, untreated, horizontal and vertical surfaces named above, with which surfaces we may do whatever we please to select, and can afford.

When the discovery had been made that lecturing was of little

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avail, because the lecture had become a mere amusement for an evening, before it had been established that the only audience worth addressing is that which reads and does not hear, lookers and not listeners, a good friend interviewed a lecturer after a Brooklyn Institute discourse and reminded him, after a talk about conditions of old times, that the palace interiors of Europe were of but little use to the American householder who would fain make his rooms comely. The answer to this rebuke, the apology, or at least the *apologia*, which the lecturer might advance is obviously this—that you cannot tell the individual members of your audience how to color the walls and the ceilings of any given room, or whether, in any given case, he had better buy a wall paper or use calcimine with the stenciled pattern added. The one way of making a room attractive is by the judicious use of color. The ordinary dining-room or sitting-room of our houses in city or country, is not susceptible of decoration by means of form. The furniture, the movable objects in the room, will be so much more in the range of vision—they will assert themselves so much more positively than will the mouldings of the dado or the door-trims or even than any plaster ribs and scrolls upon the ceiling, that those attempts at decorating the room by such simple devices as we use for the exterior will be of no account. The mouldings may as well be very simple. Nothing will be gained by notching and gouging, nothing by dog-teeth or zigzag, nothing by carving unless of richness and elaboration beyond our present assumption. Even the mantelpiece—even the decorative treatment of the whole chimney breast—cannot take you far. Beware of the mantelpiece! nothing is more dangerous than that feature when the architect feels that his only chance to show what he can do is there! The thing to strive for is color—beauty of color; and this may be rich and deep, brilliant and wrought through many gradations, or pale and cool, in two or three divergent tints rather than hues—varieties of grey rather than approaches to the primary colors. One is asked for permission to photograph his room, because it has struck the eye of the kindly visitor as exceptionally attractive; but one refuses, if he is wise, on the express ground that what has pleased has been the harmony of coloring in wall and ceiling, in rugs and draperies, in water colors on the walls and vases on the shelves. Harmony of color, refinement of color, richness of color even are within the reach of those who have the gift; but there is no possible way of opening the eyes of those who have it not, or of persuading them that they must ask some one else to arrange their room for them. That is the one thing which cannot be taught to any lady in the land, that she has not, if she has not, an eye for color, or at least that she has not the gift at working in color. The ways in which different passages of

color affect one another are, of course, quite beyond the cognition of persons who have not worked in such decoration. No artist of experience in this line but will remember instances where his ceiling has been painted, while the walls remained still in their white or grey plastering. The owner has insisted, has entreated, has given orders even that all that ceiling should come down; the certain fact that the darkened and strongly colored walls would send that ceiling up and away into heights of pale gradation is as unthinkable to the unpracticed man or woman as the spiritual life can be to one who lives in the flesh. The moment the walls are colored all the conditions are changed. A youth with five hundred dollars a year for his total revenue is not more incapable of laying out in advance how he will spend fifty thousand dollars a year when he gets it, than is the possessor of a richly painted ceiling above walls still bare, of how it will look when the walls also are painted. The conditions change, and with them changes everything—the nature of every separate detail, the size and shape and character of the whole, the point of view itself of the people who are to use and enjoy the room.

Such treatment by color alone is not susceptible of full discussion in print or by full explanation except in connection with the room itself, which is to be adorned and the hues themselves which are intended to be used. Given a room and given time and opportunity to make small scale cartoons, and to mix and lay on pieces of rough paper, the actual combinations of pigments which one purposes to employ, and the explanation of the future room can be made to the owner as well as to the workmen who are putting the thing together.

But the present occasion is of a different sort. We have now to consider the beautifying of rooms which are so far wrought with form alone that they have some value apart from the color effects produced therein. The numbers of the *Architectural Record* during the last three or four years have contained many photographic representations of fine and showy rooms in stately American houses, and it is desirable to examine the subject in the light of what is shown in these photographs to see what can be done for rooms which are presumably not to be graced with any great charm of color. This is a subject more easy to treat in print because of the possibility of giving, in illustration, black and white and gradations of grey, and also because such work in monochrome is after all that which can be most easily made successful under our present conditions. The architects of the time have been taught the great traditions, and, in a way, the general principles of design in form—they are full of it and they discuss it with one another—the general belief is, in and outside of the profession, that form is the essence of everything, and that architectural excellence, in small as

in great affairs, has to do with form and with this alone. No one will think of opening an office for the special treatment of buildings within or without from the point of view of color, nor does the interior adornment of rooms as conceived in our time accept color in the abstract as worthy of very important examination. You choose as wall paper or you give instructions for mixing your calcimine or oil paint; you succeed or fail as your eye is more or less true and your determination more or less fixed and immutable; you are hardly aware of taking anything serious in the way of artistic design. And so, pending the time when that one evil result of our French teaching, left among so much that is good and even supremely good, shall pass and leave us free to design chromatically once more, it becomes us to talk of form and do the best we can, recognizing always the fact that nothing very delightful will come of it unless good fortune is ours and sends us the munificent fairies of the world of color to do for us what we could not be sure of doing for ourselves.

The hall with stair, and serving also as a sitting-room, differs not widely in its conditions from a living room of the more usual character. Fig. 1 is such a hall; the walls simply covered with a flowered paper, the ceiling flat and with a cornice of very unpretending classical character, the trims of doors and windows brought together in twos or threes and combined with a high dado in such a way that spottiness is avoided even at the expense of diminishing the wall space to a narrow frieze throughout much of its extent—a tendency inevitable in our small and crowded interiors with many openings. Fig. 2 is a small part of the same hall in which can be seen the "old colonial" character of the high dado and the panelling under the stairs with the hand-rail and old-fashioned decoration of the stairs themselves. In cases where the free wall space is not so much reduced in extent, the question arises whether the flower pattern of the wall paper, the great spread of spotted pattern (sowing or *semé*) is endurable. The pattern has to be extremely well drawn and the combination of color harmonious quite beyond that which is generally to be found in the shops, if we are to endure a large wall space covered with such an extent of constantly recurring pattern. There is one plan which may be resorted to more frequently than it is, namely, that of division horizontally into three bands: The dado below, the frieze above, and the wall space between, usually larger than dado or frieze, and especially adapted for the hanging of pictures, water color drawings, bas reliefs, dishes, "plaques" of painted pottery and similar works of art of the portable kind. The dado may be reduced to a height of two feet six, or even of two feet two, so as to allow pictures and drawings to be hung so low that they are nearly "on the line" to a person seated in



FIG. 2. STAIRWAY IN THE HALL OF THE RESIDENCE OF ERNEST FLAGG, ESQ.
Dongan Hills, Staten Island, New York.
Ernest Flagg, Architect.

the room. The frieze may then be reduced to a width of twenty inches and adorned with a pattern much more elaborate and complex than you would wish the whole of your wall to be, because the small space will not cost so much in the aggregate to adorn richly and also because the primary colors, freely used, and the elaboration of scroll and flower designing would be out of keeping with your furniture and curtains and your home life if these adornments were spread over a larger surface. If then the room is thirteen feet high and the actual mouldings in the re-entrant angle of wall with ceiling occupy a space on the wall of ten inches (which is quite enough) you will have about eight feet of flat wall left between the dado and the frieze; but this will be reduced rather than extended in most cases, by the multiplication of parts in the picture moulding at the top of this flat surface, and by the surbase of the dado. This wall surface then will be treated very differently when, as in the case supposed, there is to be much placing of portable works of art, and when there are none and the room is adorned independently—self-contained as we may say, a room completed by the cabinet-maker and painter without regard to the possibilities or to the requirements of the future display of works of art. Fig. 3 shows how the case is sometimes met when the owner has chosen deliberately to exclude from the room any part of his collection of works of art and to adorn the room for itself. Here the dado is about of the height given above as the lowest convenient, and the cove of the cornice together with the moulded band, the stile or rail of the panels and the like, all forming a kind of entablature above the pilaster, occupy together about as much space measured vertically on the wall as cornice and frieze in the suppositious case given above. We have then the eight-foot space, as we may call it, divided up into vertical panels narrower than their height and separated by pilasters. The larger surfaces, namely those of the flat panels, being filled with a richly patterned textile material. And the reader must note this fact that a pattern in textile material, whether smooth and delicate, or rough and coarse-grained, is much more enduring in surface than when it is painted, even on tile—and assuredly much more than when it is painted on plaster or printed on paper. The woven surface, the little irregularities of thread and mesh, however minute or however bold the weaving may be, help the color design in a most surprising way; so that a piece of Persian silk tight drawn and firm, the threads pulled so close in the loom that the fabric is stiff and seems hard to fold or crease, or, on the other hand, a fabric as loose as our burlaps, affords the best known means of displaying a brilliant pattern covering the whole surface. Japanese gold woven brocades are the most brilliant materials that come readily within the reach of the buyer. It is not, however,

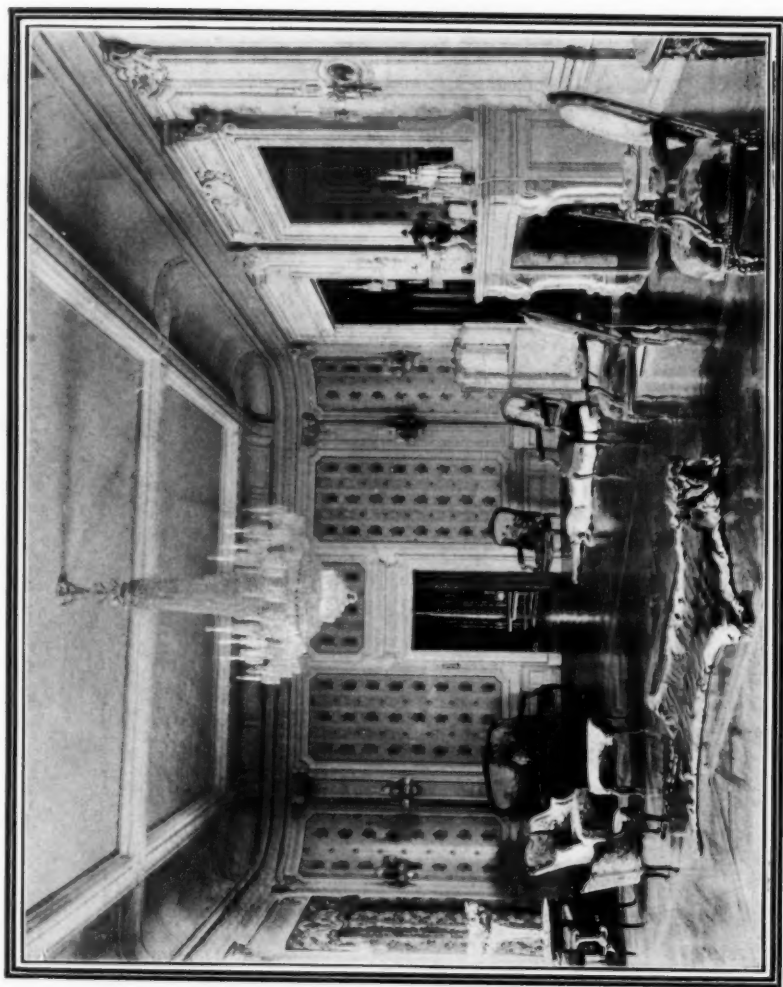


FIG. 2. DRAWING-ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF F. G. BOURNE, ESQ.
Ernest Flagg, Architect.
Cakdale, L. I.

inevitable that the pattern should be a woven one. The imitations of tapestry, not modern cheapenings of stately effects, nor yet an unconfessed deception—the cloths which are painted deliberately in patterns suggested only by the tapestry properly so called, are altogether well fitted for such reserved wall surfaces as these. And indeed an inexpensive printed chintz, or, as they began to call it twenty years ago, a cretonne, serves well in such a place where, as in Figs. 1 and 2, the woodwork is of simple character and is either smoothly-worked pine painted in flat colors, or, if of hardwood, with the natural color retained, is still unpretending in its treatment.

Here comes in, however, the question of leather. If there were no demand for anything but sombre effects of color with dull gold, there would be no material better than stamped leather for those who could afford to pay its cost. The peculiarities of its surface, its little irregularities, and the almost complete absence of absolutely plain surfaces, together with the smallness of the pieces in which it is furnished, all tend to give more vivacity to its pattern than even the stretched textile material; only the free hanging tapestry supported by hooks at the top and hung rather loosely, can rival leather in its pleasant roughness of effect. The limitations of leather are, however, closely connected with its charm, and its very considerable cost limits its use.

Fig. 4 shows how the treatment of such a room may be carried farther when there is opportunity to paint directly upon the plastered or panel surface of wall and ceiling. The need of architectural subdivisions—pilaster and entablature—disappears when your surfaces need no longer be covered with silk or leather, because you can command the talent of a mural painter. Now, it does not follow that in the days to come your mural painter must always be a man of the highest contemporary artistic rank. The services of your artist need not command the highest rate of payment allowed the masters of the art—to the very few whose names are cited whenever there is discussion of the first artists of our time. We have already reached that pitch of physical civilization that there are mural paintings to be had of not despicable quality and of agreeable if not impressive character, at prices within the reach of a fairly successful business man. In the room before us an artist of admittedly supreme rank has been at work. The paintings of *Blashfield* above the doors are but accompaniments to the exquisite composition which fills the ceiling. The taste of another owner or the inception of another painter would give the chief adornment to the walls and relegate the ceiling to a pale and not aggressive accompaniment to the strong work on the vertical surfaces. The great panel before us on the left occupied in this case



FIG. 4. DRAWING-ROOM OF THE HOUSE OF MRS. C. P. HUNTINGTON.

Southeast Corner of 5th Avenue and 57th Street, New York City.

George B. Post, Architect.

merely by a sconce with three branches for candles and a couple of adornments of the fashion of lambrequins to help occupy this broad, plain surface must have been most inviting to the mural painter. It would be the cherished wish of more householders than one, as their pecuniary freedom grew more absolute, to put that problem directly to mural painters of independent spirit and of trained power of design—the problem to adorn aright with figure subjects these great panels imitating in this work the easy daring of the Pompeian wall painters, without falling into their mechanical monotony. Fig. 5 brings us face to face with a way of solving the problem of mural decoration which will never grow tiresome. Paneling in natural woods with the color and grain of the wood used as the chief decoration of the flat surfaces is not to lose its popularity in our time. But this particular case involves also the treatment of the ceiling with immense girders crossing one another in appearance and receiving apparent support at their ends from pilasters; all of which framework, girders and pilasters alike, is wrought in the dark wood chosen for the fitting of the room. This system brings with it a quasi-assertion of constructional significance, and, as it were, challenges the inquiry into the genuineness of all this. One who has his mind fixed upon the logic of building or indeed one who finds amusement in building and loves the timbers as he loves the stones and bricks, for their own sake, and for the interesting combinations he can make of them, would refuse, I think, to accept architectural forms like these unless they expressed the real construction. Those girders would have to prove their utility as weight carriers and the floor joists must rest upon them; and then the ends of the girders would be seen not to require pilasters to hold them up, for indeed the masonry wall is that which really carries the girders, and if you want a corbel there to furnish a broad flat stone bed for the end of the beam and to diminish by a little its unsupported span, you will put it in as a corbel of visible stone; or you will build the pilaster of stone and call attention to the fact that it is a hard working part of the structure—as you may do by cutting it with long-and-short work at the two sides, stones forming the projection, but also bonded into the wall; and stopping the plaster surface against the edges of those stones. But apart from this refinement, and accepting the pilaster and the girder as mere boxing—as a continuation of the wainscoting with which the room is nearly all covered, it is to be noted that the narrow frieze left above the wainscoting and adorned with reliefs in the plaster is seen to be awaiting its treatment in color; and that the flat panels of the ceiling are also incomplete, probably for want of the same chromatic decoration. Fig. 6, a room in the same house, shows a carrying farther of this treatment in joinery. The arrangement of



FIG. 5. DINING-ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF GIFFORD PINCHOT, ESQ.
Dupont Circle, Washington, D. C.
Helms & La Farge, Architects.



FIG. 6. LIBRARY IN THE RESIDENCE OF GIFFORD PINCHOT, ESQ.
Dupont Circle, Washington, D. C.

Heins & La Farge, Architects.

woodwork above the mantel shelf, enclosing a picture treated as a panel, is noticeable as suggesting a way in which rooms may be treated with panelled and moulded and carved elaborations in hardwood, while with these is combined a somewhat free use of the greater and more splendid arts of decoration. Just such a panelled frame, with its stiles, rails, and mullions, richly worked with conventional carving and fine drawn mouldings may enclose and hold in place an indefinite number of oil paintings of the most elaborate and costly kind; or, again, may do good service by setting-off handsomely paintings of less grandiose claims to our attention, but truly decorative and beautiful in their slighter way. Thus, there is many a landscape painter whose finished picture brings about a dollar a square inch, or from that to twice the money, whose swiftly painted out-of-door studies are of quite surprising charm—fresh and brilliant in treatment, warm in color, fascinating works of art—which may yet be bought for sums reasonable enough; they will not be large, these inexpensive masterpieces, but it is worth the decorator's while to make a composition of wooden framework which will enclose them aright and bring out all their charm. A well-known room in New York, until recently the museum in which was stored a very great number of important Oriental porcelains, is fitted up with the most unique combination of shelving and panelled background, and has many panels of Japanese lacquer of fine quality encrusted into its wainscoting of dark red wood. The regret that one feels in such cases at the inevitable destruction of fine and absolutely unreplaceable cabinets and coffrets cannot blind us to the value of such work as this for the purpose of filling the large panels of such a room. The furniture-makers of the greatest of all times for furniture, the French eighteenth century, knew this well; and panels of the unmatched lacquer of the Japanese as well as of the bold and splendid Chinese work of the same general character were used for the sides and doors of wardrobes and the ends of chests of drawers as well as, more rarely, for the wooden lining of the room itself. These lacquered panels are named here as of correlative value with the paintings on canvas of our Western artists, and so they are, grade for grade. It is not every old Japanese writing-box that has the work of a great artist on the top of its cover, either inside or out.

Coming now to a system of decoration involving more splendor than those that we have been considering, and a more sumptuous work of art altogether, we may study the very elegant dining-room shown in Fig. 7. Strangely enough, as one would think who was considering only the general run of modern designs—strangely enough this more stately room is also more simply designed, its conception more realistic, its decorative treatment far more in

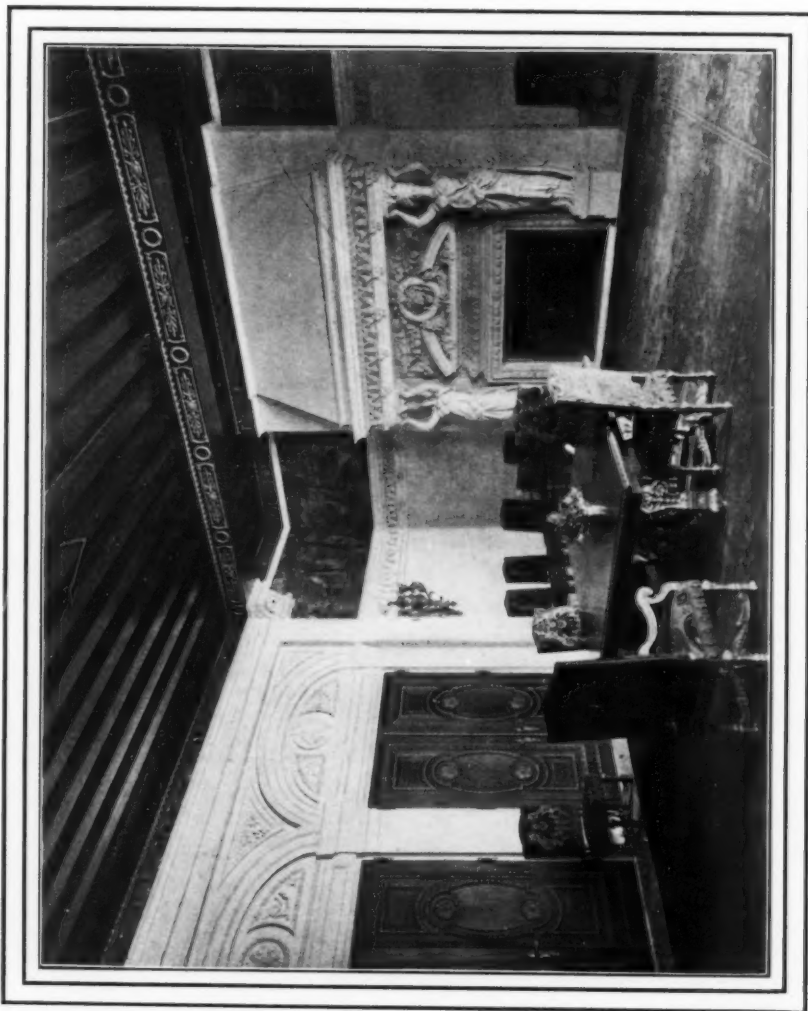


FIG. 7. DINING-ROOM OF THE SCHIEFFELIN RESIDENCE.

No. 5 East 66th Street, New York City.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

harmony with the actual building of the house than are most of the designs with which it can be compared. The walls are faced with smooth light grey stone up to a height of about seven feet, above which line there is a high and elaborately carved surbase, which detail is repeated along the front of the chimney breast in the form of a cornice for the projecting hood of the fireplace. In this way the sheathing in pale grey material is carried up to a total height of perhaps nine feet, and above that there is a frieze filled with a band of tapestry of elaborate pictorial design. The double doorway with arched heads and tympanums surrounded by a common outer trim and reaching to the girders of the ceiling is also of grey stone; and so are the elaborately carved corbels which carry the ends of the great girders, and, again, the chimney breast and the hood of the fireplace which also reach the roof. In this way there is not much left of the band of color, and the dado may be looked upon as the true wall surface, the result of such a treatment being to lower the room in apparent proportion; though not, it would seem, to a great—certainly not to a harmful—extent. The fireplace itself is wrought up to a pitch of great elegance with caryatides, freely treated, carrying the hood, and between them a rather too gorgeous capping of the fireplace itself with its fronton and multiplied bands and horizontal layers of deeply worked sculpture. All this is the handiwork of a well-known sculptor, Karl Bitter, whose designs for decorative work made in connection with the same architect who has created this dining-room, are of recognized beauty and have been spoken of with praise here and elsewhere on more than one occasion.

And let it be noted that the stone facing might be equally well of dark and mellow color, and so serve nobly as a background for paintings. A wall is treated so in the famous Burges house, in London; and another and even more brilliant instance is to be found in the same mansion in which is found our Fig. 4. Great effects are possible in such material.

As for the roof, which in this case is merely the underside of the floor above and not a "ceiling" in any proper sense of that word; it is composed of the veritable structure, and altogether the practical work of the builder of house-floors, except that by a pardonable excess of material, the beams are set much closer together than they need be, while they are also more nearly square in section—broader horizontally and less deep vertically—than the strict requirements of strength and stiffness would have dictated. In other words, this is a structural floor treated decoratively; and you have just as good a right to spend a little extra money in making your floor over-solid, when that will increase its artistic charm—as you have to add painting or sculpture to its timbers if treated in the

more absolutely economical way. There are two girders only which span the room and which diminish the bearing or span of the beams which rest upon them. The beams themselves are not decorated; they have no ornamental effect other than that given by their natural contrast of darker and lighter shades in firm stripes; but the girders are elaborately adorned on their vertical sides by applied ornamentation nearly akin to the sculptured white stone of the walls below.

There is, after all, no roof which can be put in above a room, large or small, so sensible as this of the exposed floor timbers. Fortunately, we have examples of this arrangement dating from the best periods of the builder's art since antiquity. We have *plafonds* of timber, the beams showing, and the under sides of the flooring above showing between them, of the fifteenth century (and earlier, if we will accept very simple examples) and of the succeeding centuries, always excepting the brief times of complete abandonment to a new idea. Even when the plaster ceiling, with its adornments especially adapted to the material, had replaced all other treatment for the little house of the town—the country château or schloss or manor-house retained its girders and beams, or even had new ones given it, as alterations were made. So there is no lack of examples; and when there is not an especially-felt desire of producing an effect of great stateliness, such as seems to dictate the arching up of the ceiling into what may pass for vaults, the old-fashioned treatment of the timbers comes back again as the only right, sensible way of dealing with the problem. Fig. 8 shows an interior of which nothing but the furniture is well to be seen, except the very interesting roof. Fig. 9 shows another room in the same house. In this latest case the beams are spaced far more widely than in Fig. 7 or Fig. 8; there has been reference here to the actually needed construction of modern times and of the United States; for indeed the frank recognition of the fact that a floor-joist does not need width horizontally in anything like the proportion that it needs vertical depth, is American, of the early years of the nineteenth century. To take a plank, three by twelve inches in section and set it edgewise as one of a row of beams which carry the flooring had not been attempted in Europe when the American wood-framed house was taking shape. This invention, then, has been recognized in the design now before us, Fig. 9. The surface decoration of the beam in Figs. 8 and 9 is worthy of note.

The reception-room in the house in which is the dining-room, Fig. 7, illustrates very closely the programme laid down in the early paragraphs of this paper in which was described the broad wall space, flat and relieved by a covering pattern between an upper and a lower band, the frieze and the dado. In the case before us, Fig.



FIG. 8. THE LIBRARY OF GEORGIAN COURT.

Residence of George Gould, Esq., Lakewood, N. J.

Bruce Price, Architect.

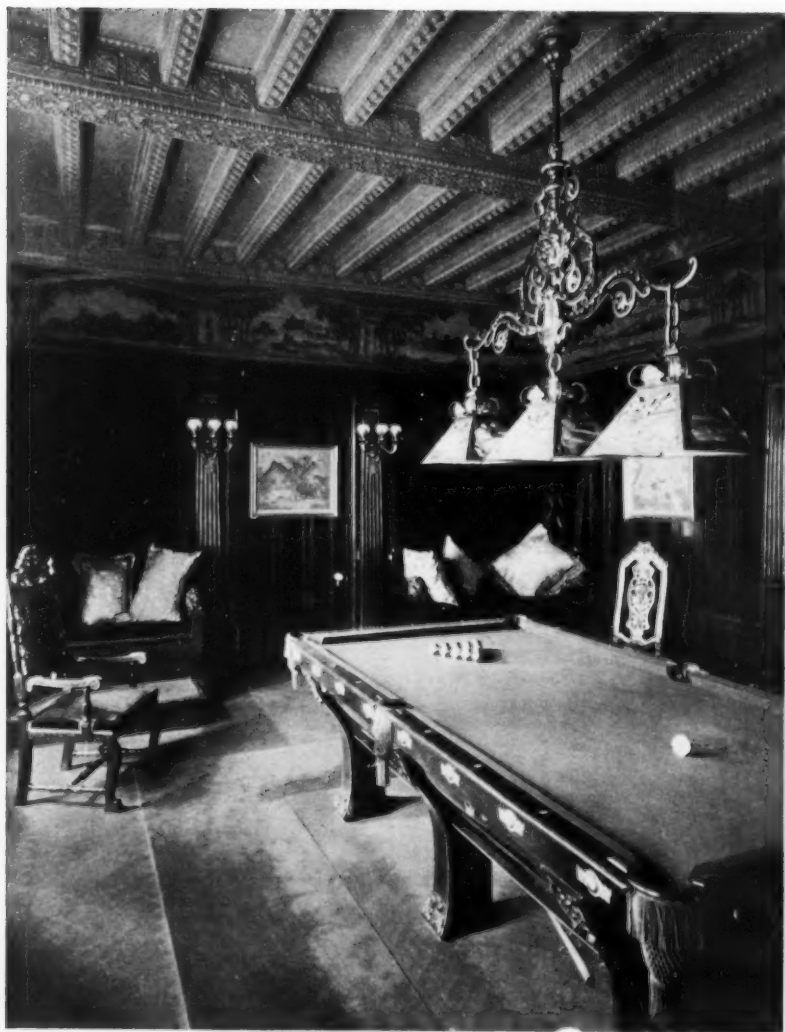


FIG. 9. BILLIARD-ROOM OF GEORGIAN COURT.
Residence of George Gould, Esq., Lakewood, N. J. Bruce Price, Architect.

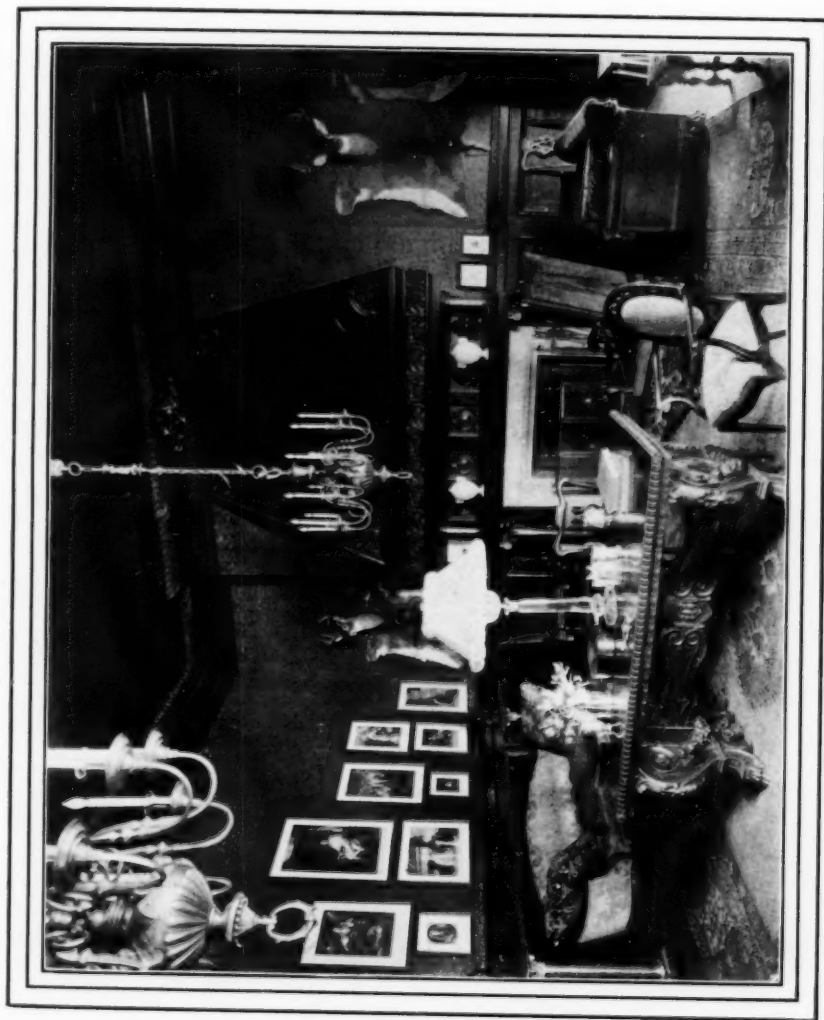


FIG. 10. RECEPTION ROOM OF THE SCHIEFFELIN RESIDENCE.
No. 5 East 65th Street, New York City.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

10, there is no distinct frieze, but the lower members of the wall cornice—those which might be called the frieze and architrave of what is almost an entablature, replace it and reduce the wall space proper to nearly the proportions imagined above. It is only the dado, much higher than would be desired where there were many pictures to hang and to display, which changes greatly the nature of that ideal programme. The library of the same house has the walls sheathed with books, as they should be; but the city dust has compelled the withdrawing of the books behind the plaits of a drawn curtain. It is better in effect than glass doors unless those are of leaded sash with irregularities of decorative glass, and it is better than they in that there are no vexatious swinging or sliding doors to reckon with. The room is made Jacobean in character by the architectural chimney-piece carried to the top, and the very attractive plaster ceiling. The drawing-rooms of the same house are shown in Fig. 11, and in this we are brought back to very nearly the same scheme which was found to be set forth in Fig. 3, that is to say, the walls are divided into panels higher than their width, which are separated by fluted pilasters. It is a style which does not tire the eye when used, as it is in harmony with the appliances of a fashionable drawing-room. Whether it is absolutely essential that a good dwelling house should have a fashionable drawing-room—whether a series of sitting-rooms arranged and adorned so as to allow of much added adornment in the way of pictures and bas reliefs, dishes and vases, color and form in their greatest refinements, is another question; and if it were a general treatise on interior decoration which we had in hand there would be much to say in this connection.

There is indeed a certain protest which the student of art who may have realistic proclivities is apt to enter in view of the great differentiation maintained between the decorative treatment of different rooms. Such a library as that given in Fig. 12 is evidently a book-room and nothing else, a room for literary work of some kind; and there is no space in it for elegant furniture, for the display of works of art, beyond the two or three busts or bas reliefs which the shelves and doorheads can hold—it has its unadorned charm which it cannot be without. But once let the requirements of the room become less peculiar, and it appears a mere superstition which may prevail at one time or at another time, in Georgian England or in the American cities of our father's time, that rooms must be very different in style, as they are different in their uses. Green and walnut was, we are told, the proper coloration for the dining-room and white and gold for the "parlor," and so on. But the independent designer is not so sure about that, and would prefer in many cases a room invested with only such simple treatment of form as may

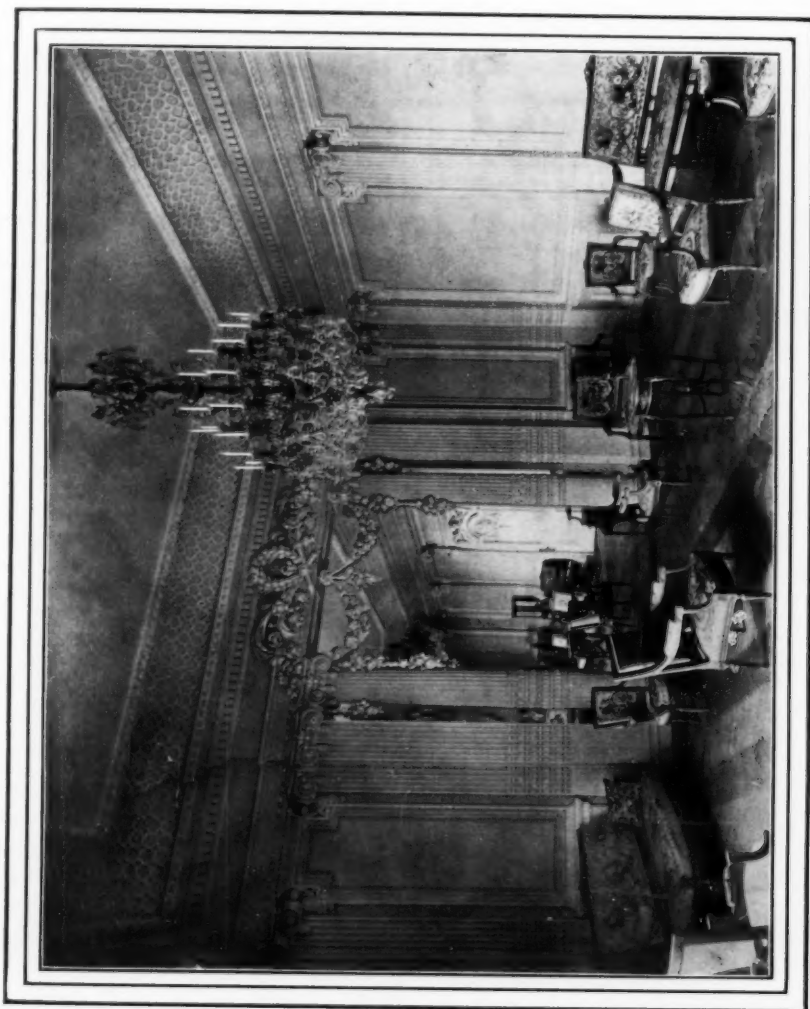


FIG. 11. DRAWING-ROOM OF THE SCHIEFFELIN RESIDENCE.
No. 5 East 64th Street, New York City.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

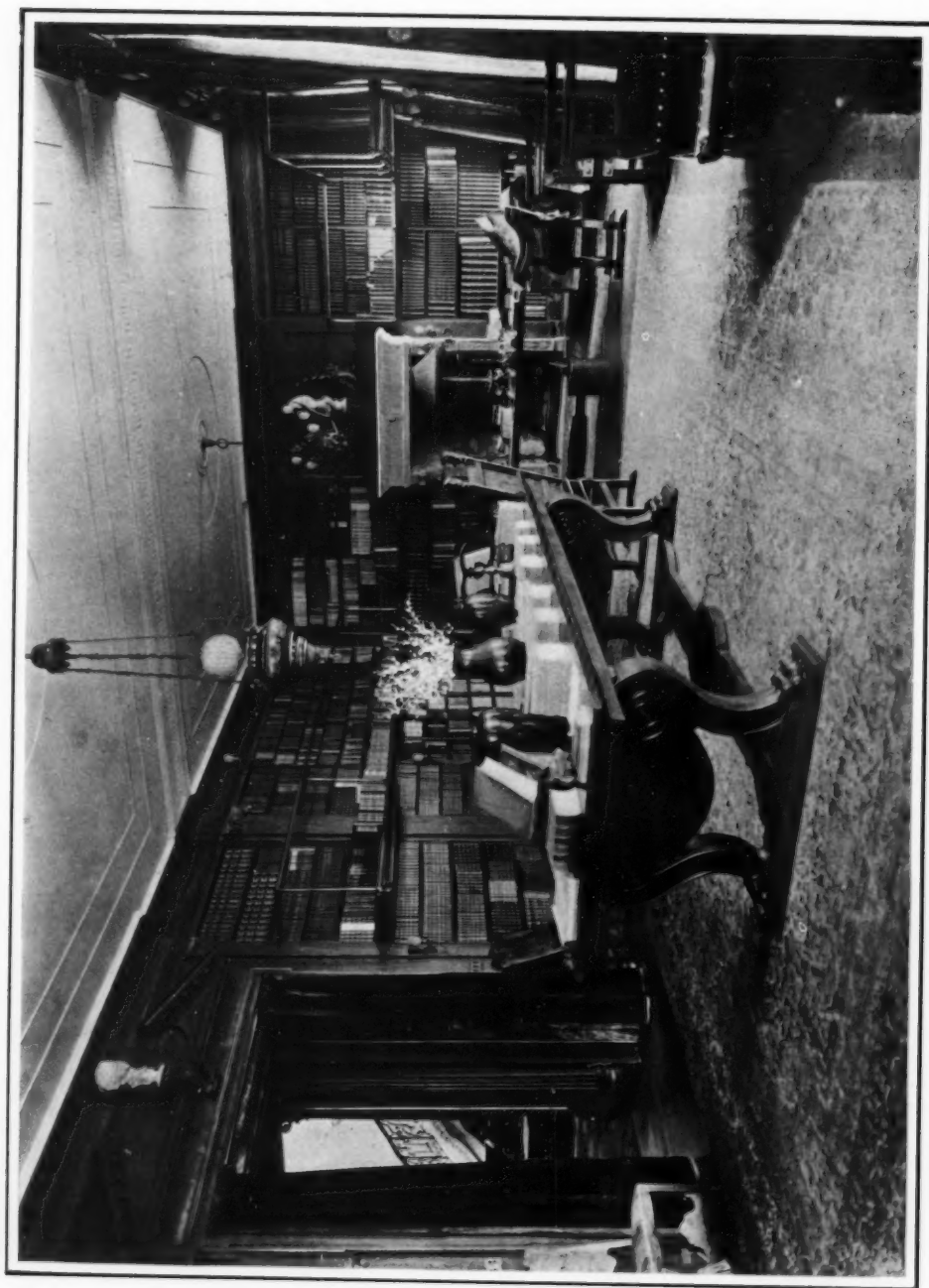


FIG. 12. LIBRARY IN THE RESIDENCE OF HENRY W. POOR, ESQ.
Gramercy Park, New York City.

McKim, Mead & White, Architects.

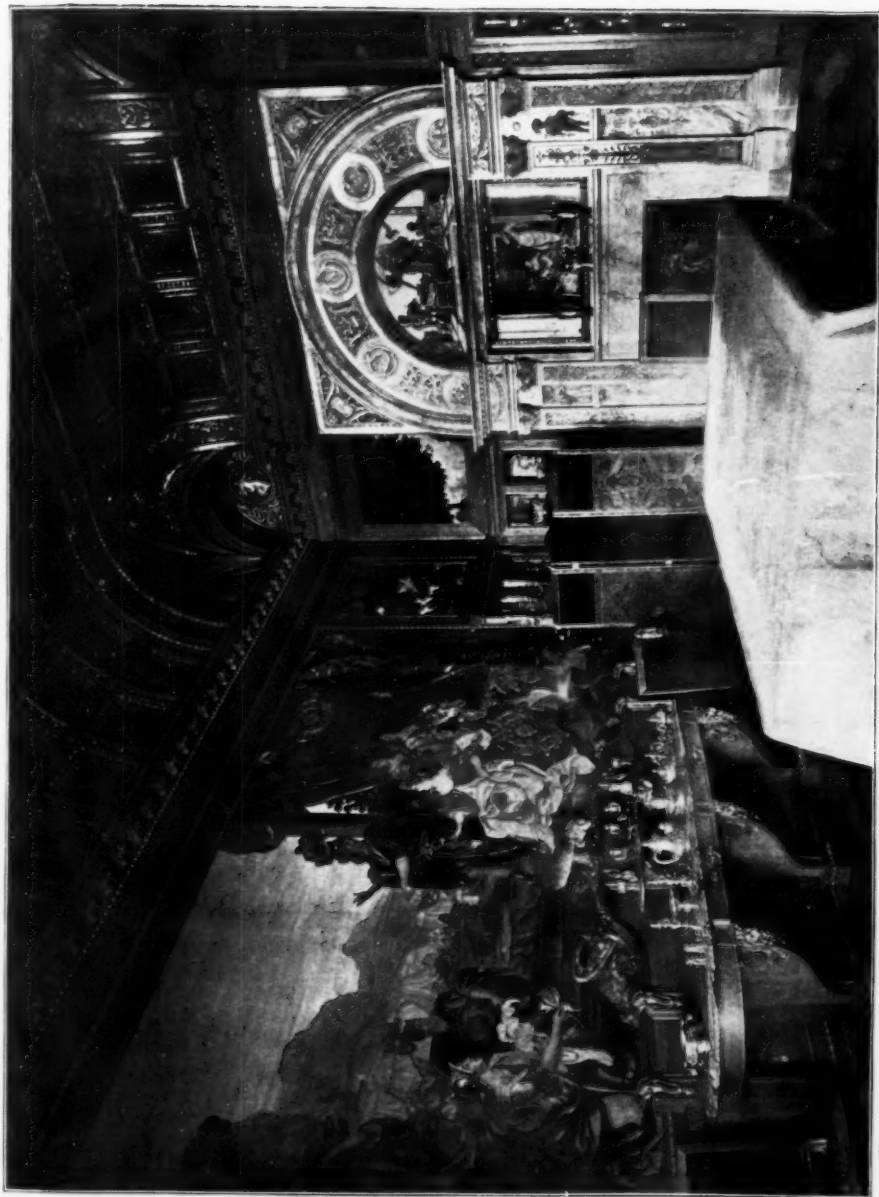


FIG. 13. DINING-ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF MRS. C. P. HUNTINGTON, Southeast Corner of 5th Avenue and 57th Street, New York City.

George B. Post, Architect.



FIG. 14. DETAIL OF THE STATE DINING-ROOM IN THE RESIDENCE OF
MRS. C. P. HUNTINGTON.
Southeast Corner of 5th Avenue and 57th Street, New York City. George B. Post, Architect.

best help the coloring and without a very desperate attempt to assert much in advance about the avowed purpose of the room. For instance, there is much to be seen in the room partly illustrated in Fig. 13. On the walls are very splendid tapestries of recognized importance in the history of art; the woodwork of the dado and wall cornice is elaborate and the sculpture used with much discretion; the chimney piece is a remarkable design from which the familiar old shelf is almost wholly excluded and which is reduced to a frame of the most elaborate workmanship, a piece of carefully fitted mosaic of Siena marble, the pieces, some carved, and some smooth and flat and highly polished, alternating with one another to produce the effect of a bas relief in parti-colored material; the frame as for a great work of art—a treatment which is, then, justified by the insertion above the fireplace of a mirror and a very remarkable painting by Elihu Vedder. As for the ceiling, it is treated with a deep cove, and this with the obvious purpose of lowering the walls and apparently increasing the size of the room as judged by its ceiling—the room being indeed small for the necessary height “between timbers.” This ceiling is indeed adorned by larger pictures, the work of the above named painter, but nothing of this shows in the photograph. In such a room there may be no reasonable opportunity to hang paintings or to set up vases on shelves; the room was intended, it is clear, to be small in proportion to its richness of treatment; it is a private dining-room for a very small company only; but then it might equally well serve as any one of a number of sitting-rooms of different arbitrary names. The decision made to fill its not very ample walls with the most pictorial of all textile fabrics may be wise. There is found in them a sufficient occupation for the mind of the student of art. The figures in the tapestries are, of course, much less prominent in their actual effect than as seen in the photograph, where they appear to have almost the solidity of reliefs—indeed the flatness of tapestry designs is well known; but they suffice; and the master of such a house would be pressed indeed by his collection of portable works of art if some of them had to be placed in this small apartment. It would serve well for the work-room attached to a large library—well for a “Morning Room,” well for one suite of parlors of what name soever.

Fig. 14 shows a part of a much larger dining-room in which the walls are kept free for the hanging of important paintings, and the chimney piece, which nearly fills the picture given here, is in dark woodwork encrusted with inlays in slight relief in pearl shell. This mantelpiece, the work of John La Farge, who made it a part of a very elaborate general design not now to be seen in its entirety, is remarkable in this respect, that it adapts itself perfectly to the paint-

ings near it, even the most delicate gradations of color bearing the neighborhood of the reddish brown and pearl without injury by the contrast; while still the chimney piece is a work of extraordinary sumptuosity.

It has seemed best to exclude from this inquiry all consideration of the staircase and entrance hall when they are nothing more than a staircase and entrance hall. Comparison is not feasible between these and the inner and more private rooms of a house, and the extremely trying problem of the decoration of the stair itself introduces a very important element into the design. There is difficulty, moreover, in showing in photographs and without a plan, as without drawings of cross-section, how a large hall and stairway are put together. The more decorative of the recently built halls are also very large—wholly out of scale with the rooms which connect with them; not unreasonably so, not out of scale in the sense of being defective in artistic treatment, because the difference in their conditions and requirements fixes at once a different scale for them; but still hard to compare on consecutive pages with even large rooms of residence and of entertainment. The rooms which we live in, and even those in which we entertain in a stately way are after all planned with reference to the human stature and to the grouping of twos and threes in conversation, or of a single group of twenty; but the large hall of a country house will often be carried up to the roof, with galleries around it connecting with the rooms in different stories; and this feature is introduced even into city houses in the few cases where land has been taken up for the purpose with a noble disregard of its primary cost. The halls, therefore, should receive a special treatment.

Russell Sturgis.

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HOW AND WHERE TO LIVE IN PARIS ON \$3,000
A YEAR.

Part II.

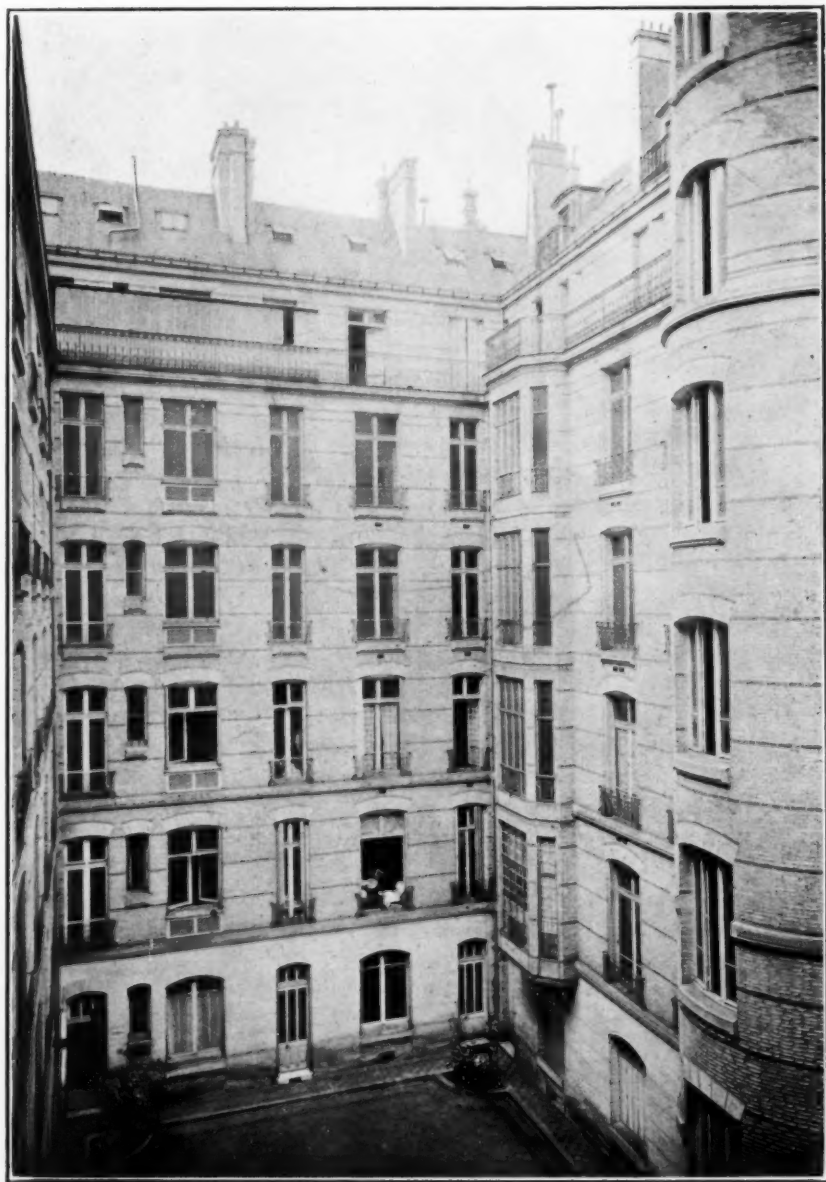
N O. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN forms part of a group of four residences belonging to the Vicomtesse de Tredern, the celebrated society singer. These four houses were built in 1898, on a large piece of ground somewhat of the shape of a right-angled triangle, of which the Avenue Henri-Martin forms the hypotenuse and the supporting wall of the Passy Cemetery one of the sides. The architect who drew up the plans, M. Emile Vaudremer, is a member of the Institute, and the building is a good specimen of his skill. M. Vaudremer likes to make use of various materials. He was the first to mingle red brick and stone, and to introduce, here and there, in suitable places, and with due artistic discretion, lines and points of green or red enamel. Rational and ingenious consideration of the nature of building materials also induced him to abandon the old theory that all woodwork should be painted white or brown, and adopt green tints, which are more pleasing to the eye, and harmonize well with façades. Moreover, he is not afraid to break space that is ugly on account of its size, with here a stone mullion, there a talus—which is less shabby-looking than slab supports—or to place in angles, arches supported by pillars springing from corbels, in the Moorish fashion, or to put carved stone headings over dormer windows, in the 15th century style. He can turn to advantage any accident of construction, and corners, which are too often sacrificed in ordinary masonry, he has so deeply studied, that it might be said he creates difficulties for the purpose of finding original solutions for them. But, besides being an original architect, M. Vaudremer is also a rational one, and his apartments are exceedingly comfortable.

The house which I have chosen for a residence, fascinated me by the simple elegance of its façade. This house consists of four buildings; the first, on the Avenue Henri-Martin; the second, between two large courts; the third, at the bottom of the second court; the fourth, to the left of this court, and lighted by a third court. There is only one entrance, and that is the carriage gateway on the Avenue Henri-Martin. A large vestibule leads to the first court. From this court there are two other vestibules, one to the right for the apartments on the right, the other opposite for the apartments of the center and left side, and also leading to the second court. A carriageway leads from the second to the third court.



FACADE OF THE APARTMENT HOUSE AT No. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect



THE FIRST COURT OF THE APARTMENT HOUSE AT No. 29 AVENUE
HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.

The building on the avenue is built over cellars, and consists of a ground floor, five square stories, and a garret story. The building between the two large courts is also built over cellars, and consists of a ground floor, five square stories and two stories in the roof. The building at the bottom of the second court contains only a ground floor, two square stories and one in the roof. On the avenue the façade is entirely in hewn stone with projecting bay windows. On the court, the façade is in hewn stone on the ground floor and in white brick with bands of red brick on the floors above, with keystones in hewn stone. All the balconies of the first floor are in granite, and those of the fifth floor are in stone. The railings are of cast-iron with iron frames.

The end walls are built of mill stone with bricked chimneys. The dividing walls—containing the chimneys—are of brick, fourteen and a half inches thick. The division walls supporting the floors are of iron and brick. The partition walls are made of plaster slabs. The living rooms are parquetted, as also are the reception rooms. The kitchens, offices, and bathrooms are tiled. There are three grand staircases, with an elevator on each. There are also three back staircases, made of iron and wood. The roofs and inserted ceilings are in wood. The sides of the high mansard roofs are covered in slate, and the flat tops with zinc. The building at the end of the second court, and the stable buildings have tiled roofs without a flat top.

The reception rooms are decorated with a false wainscot and painted a light color. The walls of the dwelling-rooms are papered. The windows of all the dwelling and reception rooms, and the bathrooms are provided with folding iron shutters. The first vestibule leading to the first court, and also the vestibule leading from the first to the second court are lined with thick linoleum, in order to deaden the noise of carriages and prevent shaking. The courts are paved with brown ware blocks.

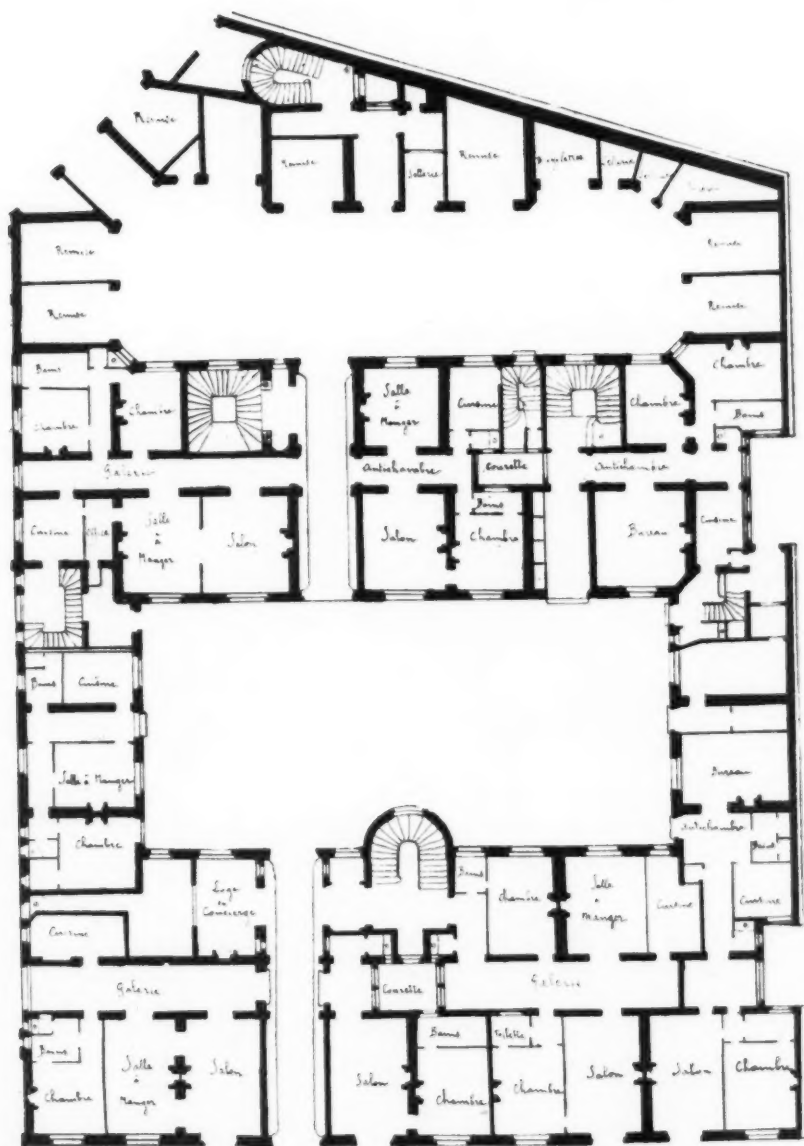
The house is provided with electricity and gas. The halls, staircases, etc., are lighted by electricity until midnight. There is also a steam-heating apparatus with branches warming all the staircases, passages or antechambers, drawing and dining-rooms. Needless to say, there is plenty of water in kitchens, bathrooms, and water-closets.

The building on the Avenue Henri-Martin has four apartments on the ground floor. The tenants of these apartments are entitled to the use of the garden, and each has a private door besides the entrance under the vestibule. There are two very large sets of apartments on each of the six floors on the building. The building between the two courts has three apartments on the ground floor, also three apartments on each of the five floors above. On



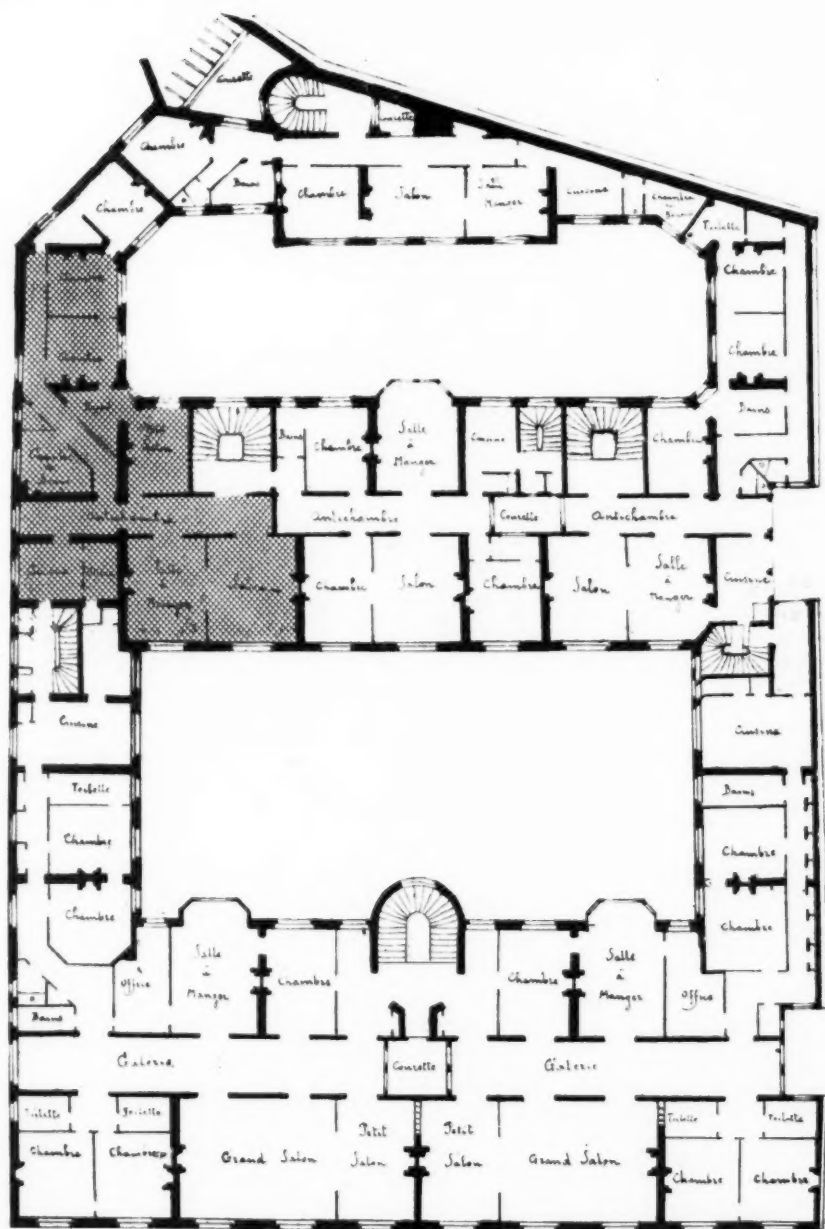
THE SECOND COURT OF THE APARTMENT HOUSE AT No. 29 AVENUE
HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.



PLAN OF GROUND FLOOR OF No. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.



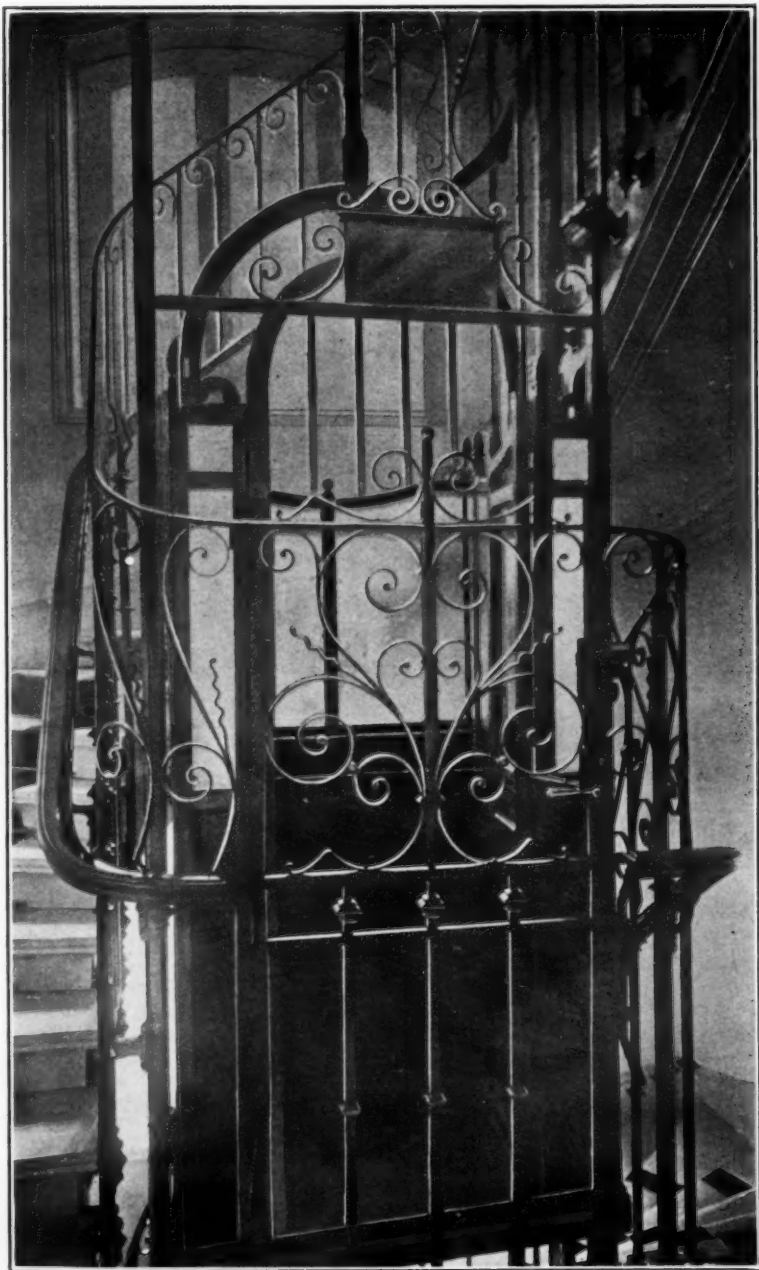
UPPER FLOOR PLAN OF No. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.

The shaded apartment is the one occupied by the writer.



THE COACH HOUSE AT No. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN
M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.



A STAIRWAY OF No. 29 AVENUE HENRI-MARTIN.

M. Emile Vaudremer, Architect.

the sixth floor are three large studios for artists with living rooms. On the seventh floor are the servants' rooms. The ground floor of the building at the end only contains coach-houses, harness-rooms, and a room for storing bicycles. On each of the three stories above there is an apartment suitable for a middle-class family. The fourth building on the left of the second court contains the stables, and over them lodgings for coachmen and hay lofts.

It would be interesting to know what this house brings in. But, though the Vicomtesse de Tredern does not mind being spoken about as a fashionable singer, it appears she does not care for publicity in her quality of landlady. We have, therefore, been unable to obtain any information on this point, but, on the whole, it is easy to estimate, in round figures, what the property produces.

The apartments on the avenue let at one thousand to sixteen hundred dollars. The apartments on the courts let at four hundred dollars at least. The charge for the stables is a hundred dollars for each horse, and for the coach-houses, a hundred dollars for each carriage—the lodging of the coachman is extra. Year in, year out, the total rents of the house must bring in \$24,000. I have taken into consideration the high price of land in this district. I have also knocked off the expenses for maintenance, warming, lighting, etc. I have also deducted taxes, water, etc., and I have come to the conclusion that the construction of this property was a good investment, and that it brings in at least five per cent., which is very good in these days, for, in France, money does not pay more than three per cent. at present.

And now allow me to guide you to the entrance of my own private apartment. After having passed through the first vestibule, I cross the first court, then I enter the second vestibule; to my left a glass door opens on the staircase which leads to my apartment. The staircase is of plate-iron, covered with white varnished wood, and carpeted. The banisters are of wrought-iron, as also are the doors of the elevator. The walls, which are painted white, are scrupulously clean, with none of those useless mouldings or sculptured ornaments which are nothing but nests for dust. The steps are so easy that, though I live on the fourth floor, I walk up to my rooms without fatigue. Nevertheless, I generally prefer to take the elevator. Here I am, on the landing of the fourth floor. Like all the landings above and below it is well lighted by a bay window, glazed with what is called "cathedral glass," which opens on the second floor. On each floor there are two apartments; one to the left of, and the other opposite the elevator. I live in the one opposite. I press the button of an electric bell, my servant opens the door, and I enter.

Fernand Mazade.

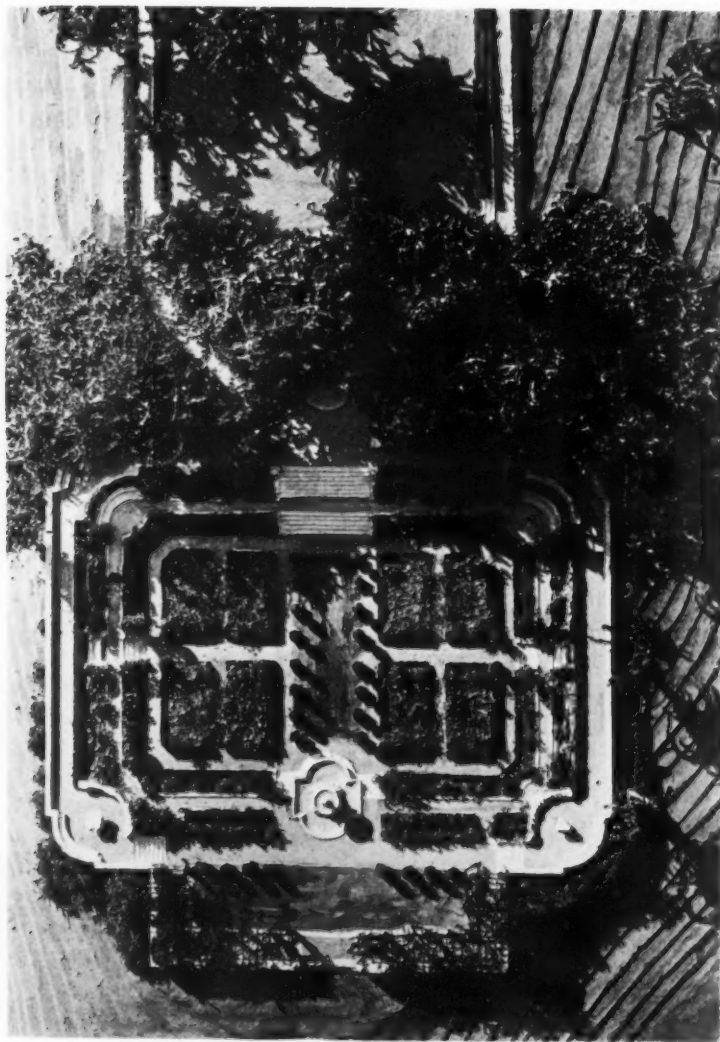
THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

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WHILE it is only of recent years that New Yorkers have taken very seriously to life in the country, the well-to-do residents of Boston and its vicinity have long been used to passing a comparatively large portion of their time on their country places, and spending trouble and money in making the estates all that country estates should be. It is not a matter of accident consequently that a considerable proportion of the most elaborate formal gardens, which have been laid out by American architects have been laid out on country places situated not very far from Boston.

The Garden of "Weld," which is herewith illustrated, is part of the estate of Mr. Larz Anderson in Brookline, and has been planned by Mr. Charles A. Platt, who laid out the well-known garden of Faulkner Farm also in Brookline, and who has been peculiarly successful in reproducing under American conditions the high style, the elaborate design and peculiar fragrance of the old Italian gardens. The estate of "Weld" is situated on the top of a high hill, the plateau of which is pretty well covered by the house, the grounds immediately surrounding it and the garden. From the house and garden the land, which falls away sharply, is well wooded, and the garden consequently is provided with the shelter and background offered by fine trees. The reproduction of the model for the preliminary study shows the lie of the land, and the situation and dimensions of the garden, but the reader must be warned that the design has been altered in many of its details since this preliminary study was made.

The house, which is not shown in the model, is situated to the right, just beyond the line at which the picture ends. Between the house and the garden is in the first place a bowling green, the terminal feature of which is an exedra, while back of the exedra is a grove of trees which is to shut off the bowling green and the house from the garden. The walks leading from the house to the garden have not been laid out as shown in the model. There are two walks on the boundary of the bowling green, and leading through the grove to the two gazebos at the upper corners of the garden. There are also two other walks leading through the grove, and coming out on the garden, about midway between the gazebos on one side and the line of the mall on the other.

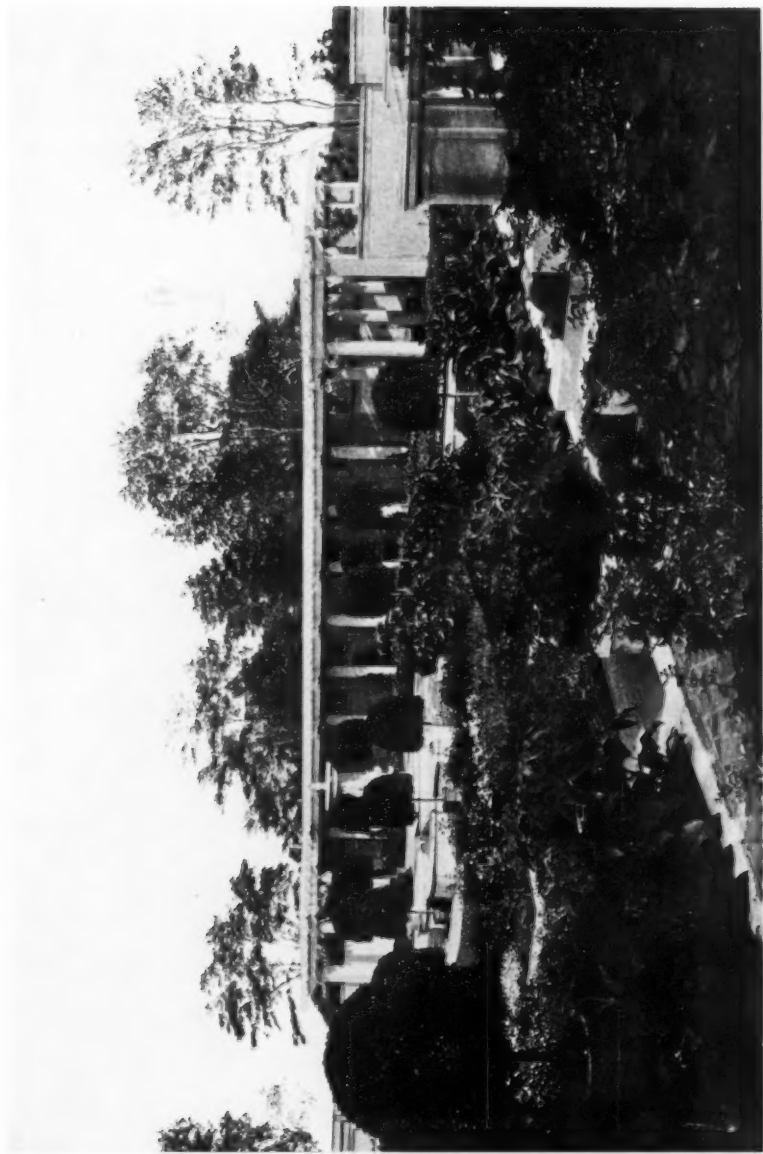
The gazebos, mentioned above, are not shown in the model, but are situated in the two corners of the garden nearer the house. They are illustrated on pages 444 and 445. As one enters the garden by way of the inner covered alleys through the grove one



THE MODEL OF THE PRELIMINARY STUDY OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD,"
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., at Brookline, Mass.
Charles A. Platt, Architect.

sees the garden almost on the line of the illustration on page 441. The cross view of the garden at the end near the house is figured on page 443. Down the center of the garden is the mall shown on page 439, which leads to the very beautiful old fountain illustrated on page 440, while beyond the fountain is the pergola, very much as it is in the reproduction of the model. One of the most interesting characteristics of the garden is the differences of level, of which there are three. The highest level is that of the terrace walks at the two sides, which is the same as the level of the gaze-bos. Then there is a lower terrace walk, paved in brick, of which a glimpse may be obtained in the illustration on page 449, and which is on the same level with the fountain and the pergola. Finally there is the lowest level, that of the mall and the flower beds. The layout of the garden is just about a square, but the mall down the center line emphasises its length. The different levels, the wealth of foliage in the background, and the many attractive features of the layout make the garden one of the most interesting which has been designed in this country.





VIEW DIAGONALLY ACROSS THE GARDEN OF "WELL,"
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

"AMERICAN GARDENS."

THE art of gardening is perhaps more strongly indicative of the artistic culture of a nation than any one of the allied arts. The reason is twofold: First, it requires a superabundance of wealth and leisure, and is therefore the last art to develop; and, second, because it is the last art to develop, it reflects the stage of development to which the arts as a whole have arisen.

Garden art in this country has fairly passed its embryonic stage, and is engrossing the serious services of a special class of artists. Both the patrons and artists of this craft are vigorous in their enthusiasm, and the multiplications of gardens, magnificent and modest, are in number as the leaves of Vallambrosa.

To what extent are these rapidly multiplying gardens indicative of a native art, and to what extent do they offer a true background to the life of their owners?

The artistic quality or originality of the artists of a given period is a fairly accurate reflection of the artistic culture of the laymen of the same period; the influence of one upon the other is reciprocal. Where a Phidias appears, there also we find a Pericles. Artists or experts are but the technical medium through which the general culture of a nation finds its various passages of expression. Hence in the customs and habits of the wealthy and leisure class will be found the seed of inspiration which is to blossom under the guidance of the artist.

An art which has any pretensions to purity, to vitality, and above all, to homogeneity, must have several generations of a wealthy and leisure class upon which to build. If it has not this primary requisite, it may be accurate in detail and in conception of design; but it will not be pure in the sense of being indigenous; or vital in the sense of representing a spontaneous expression of æsthetic appreciation; or homogeneous, in the sense of being a background or an underlying and accurate expression of the habits, character and inwardness of the people themselves.

Have we this primary requisite? The number of artists of this country who have an international reputation, and who at the same time produce work which is native in character, could be counted upon the fingers of one hand; and similarly, the number of wealthy laymen who have inherited a culture deeply tinged with the past, could probably be counted upon the remaining fingers. The wealth of our country considerably exceeds its culture. This is obviously unavoidable on account of the youthful stage of its evolution. Wealth may be acquired in a few days, but a culture which is

inborn, productive and delicate of taste, is the outcome of a well-seasoned inheritance. It is doubtful if we have this preliminary requisite, except occasionally and in its potentiality.

The towering buildings of Manhattan are certainly national in character, but savor more of an agility in the meeting and overcoming of local difficulties than of an artistic spirit, and the recent epidemic of public libraries is more apt to cheapen the value of learning, than to inspire any national tendency along architectural lines.

The same general criticism may be applied to the almost phenomenal increase in the building of fine gardens. They represent little else than the wealth of one class, and the determination of another to naturalize in this country the best models offered by the gardens of Europe. They are not indicative of native art, and represent but an artificial background to the nation as a whole. This general lack of conformity between our gardens and their representative class is finely contrasted with the perfect harmony which exists between the life and character of the Italian and his villa, the Englishman and his family estate or the Japanese and his quaint but beautiful, and almost sacred garden-world. To be aerially transported and suddenly dropped, like the son of Daedalus, into either an Italian, English or Japanese garden, would leave no doubt as to the national character of the garden. But should our imaginary aeronaut be similarly dropped into an American garden, it would require a considerable archæological knowledge to unravel the mystery of his whereabouts. Here he would find the English bowling-green, the Italian pergola, with its wealth of Japanese creepers, a multitude of antique vases, time-scarred fountains contrasting somewhat sharply with the virgin blush of native stone; well-heads, profuse with well-watered plants, archaic sun-dials and plants freshly imported from Belgium.

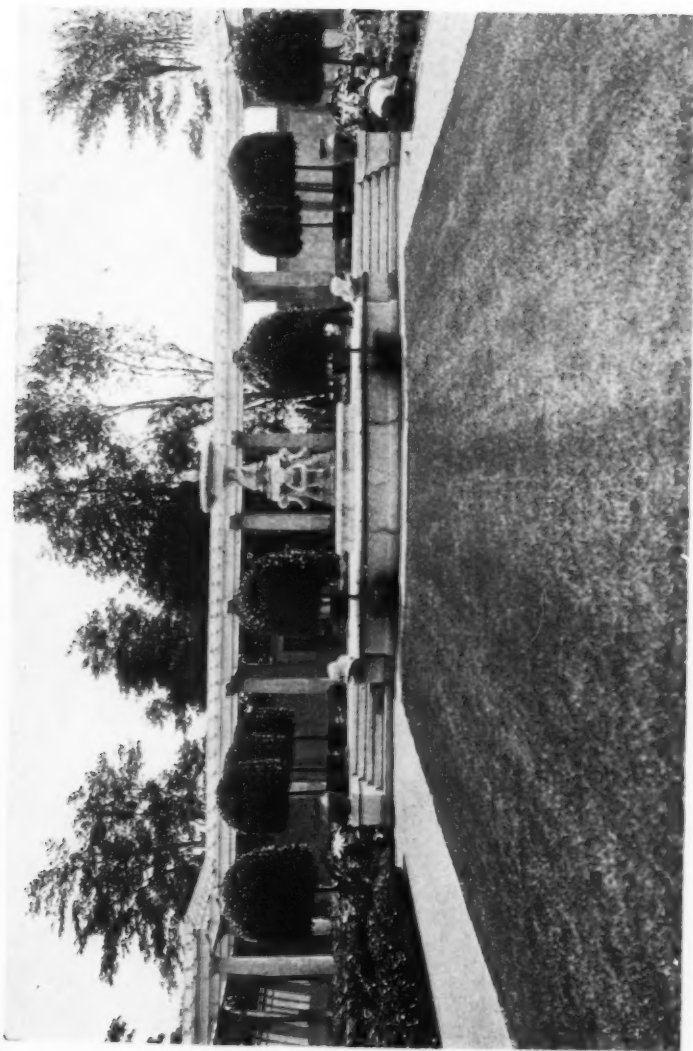
It should be added, however, that these incongruities, if such they be, cannot be charged to the architect. All art in a new country that lacks a vigorous native art of its own, must be first of all educational; and this is particularly true of an art like garden design, which is elaborate and decorative, yet at the same time domestic. It cannot afford to be experimental and original until a wholesome tradition is firmly established. Moreover, since its purpose is to introduce into this country reproductions or adaptations of the best European models, of whatever origin, it must be judged, not by the archæological, but by the artistic congruity of the result.

Garden art is eminently a domestic art. The garden originated in the love of country life as distinguished from city life, and it is only under the warmth, as it were, of a devoted attachment to such a life that the art of gardening will ever bloom in any vital sense.



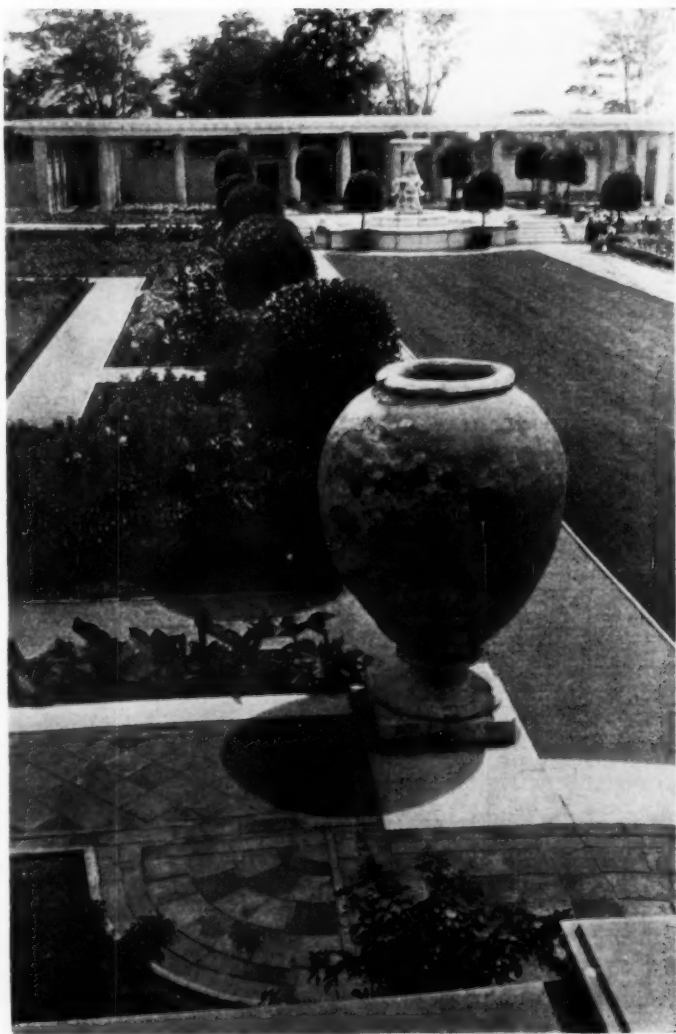
THE MALL OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



THE FOUNTAIN OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



LONGITUDINAL VIEW OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD," PARALLEL
TO THE MALL.
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

City life, or occasional visitations to fashionable country seats, of a class primarily devoted to the pleasures of city life, will never create a thoroughly characteristic art. The garden cannot be separated from the country, and the pleasures, mental and physical, which are peculiar to a country life. Hence, before any nation can possess a truly representative art in gardening, it must first evolve a class which is truly devoted to, and thoroughly representative of the refinements and culture peculiar to rural life.

Have we a class which is distinctly representative of such a life? I think we can safely state that we have no such class, as yet, although there is to-day a tendency in that direction, particularly among the residents of Boston and its vicinity. Our country life such as it is, consists of the farming population, the suburban class and a fashionable coterie of pleasure seekers, who have their magnificent country seats.

Of the suburban class, the most that can be said is that they are undoubtedly a worthy class with the best of intentions, but who are still in an intermediate state where souls are prepared by expiatory suffering for the paradise of country life. It is, however, to the wealthy and leisure class that we must look for the eventual development of the representative country-loving class. The majority of this class have, undoubtedly, an attachment for country life, and in many cases have beautiful country establishments. But are they homes? Can that be a home which is visited for a period of three weeks, more or less; according as the season, or the trend of fashion dictates? Establishments of this nature are little more than fashionable inns, and have no actual local significance. The interests of the owners are not centered primarily in the pleasures or intellectual pastimes peculiar to such an establishment. Yet these gentlemen are undoubtedly becoming more and more interested in country life for its own sake than they were, and their children are in many instances beginning to spend perhaps the larger part of their time in the country. They can never become, like the English aristocracy and landed gentry, a class primarily dependent on the soil, both for income and amusement. Their houses will keep the character of villas for occasional residence, and will never be transformed into the dwellings of people who are permanently settled on the land; but of course, this is only a definition, not necessarily a disadvantage. Some of the most wholesome examples of country life and some of the most charming examples of garden art, are associated with the villa.

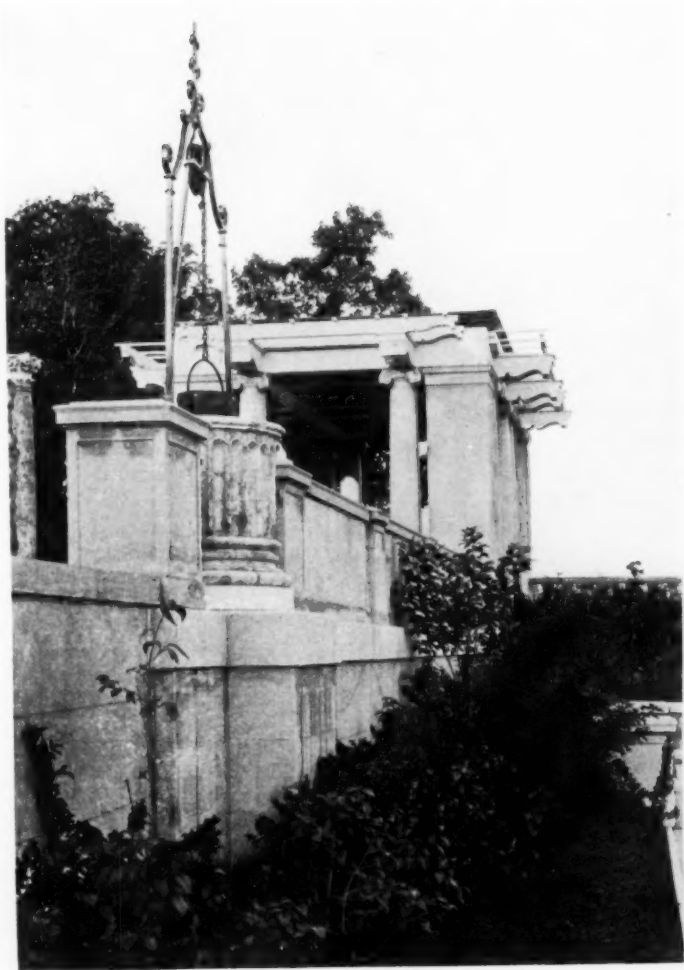
The formal garden as a distinct style has now become so generally accepted as the ideal type of garden, that a few remarks concerning the chief problems and dominant characteristics thereof may not here be out of place.



VIEW ACROSS THE UPPER END OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



CROSS VIEW FROM A GAZEBOS IN THE UPPER END OF THE
GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



VIEW FROM WITHOUT OF A GAZEBOS AT AN UPPER CORNER
OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

Estate of Larz Anderson, Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

We find the term formal garden frequently mis-applied in connection with detached pieces of formal work in immediate connection, more or less, with the house, i. e., flower beds, formal entrances and so on; but such an application of the term is obviously erroneous. An examination of the numerous publications which are devoted to this subject in conjunction with rural architecture, will show that the majority of "formal gardens" are merely formal features, loosely connected with each other and the house, and occupying but a comparatively small part of the improved portion of the estate.

The three most important elements or problems involved in the designing of a formal garden consist in the proper disposition of the planting scheme, the location and quantity of the architectural features, and ultimately, the ideal area which is to be occupied by the entire garden.

The relation between the planting and the architecture is so closely interdependent that they are best considered in conjunction. The relative importance of the two is practically co-ordinate. It is impossible to conceive of a garden without foliage; on the other hand, as a matter of artistic completeness, the judicious insertion of architectural features into the formal garden is so beneficial that it cannot be considered as ideal without them. Hence, other things being equal, the proper proportion and artistic intermingling of the two may be considered as the ultimate object in the composition. The architecture must be sufficiently subordinated in amount so that it will not discount the mellowing effect of the foliage—for the function of foliage is to enrich the barrenness of the architecture, to soften the angularity of the paths and to draw out the most characteristic elements of the garden as a whole. The function of planting in the formal garden is somewhat paralleled by the interior decorating of the house. With the exception of the minor ornaments, such as sun-dials and seats, the architectural accompaniments of the formal garden should be placed in conjunction with its boundaries. Not only will this bring the more important architectural features in conjunction with the massive and more luxuriant foliage—which should be always placed at the extremity of the garden—but it will aid in the important matter of enriching and animating the boundary, thus accentuating its relation to the various proportions of the design, which, obviously, it determines. A nice discrimination is required in adjusting the accurate proportion of architectural accompaniment to the garden. It is better to err on the side of moderation, which is a negative fault, than to overload the garden with superfluous stonework, which is a fault of positive character. The same guarded and temperate taste that should control the quantity and quality of furniture that is selected



PERGOLA AT THE LOWER END OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass. Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

for the house should be exercised in the choice of the architectural furniture of the garden.

In the choice of plants for the formal garden, too much emphasis cannot be laid upon the importance of securing the finer evergreens. The number of evergreens in proportion to the total number of plants should be not less than one-half. The very nature of the formal garden demands that its general effect should be stationary. It is a studied work of art, and its vital details should be permanent in effect. In order to define the principle lines of axes, the main points of intersection and the dominant proportions, evergreens only should be used, and where practicable, such evergreens as are hardy. It is not well to depend too much upon bay-trees and the like, for then the garden will appear forlorn and desolate in the early spring and late fall, which are, in many respects, the most enjoyable seasons. To plan the constituents of a formal garden so that its chief beauty will appear only during a certain portion of the year is undesirable, but is not infrequently practiced for the reason that our great gardens are often intended for use during a few months only.

Apart from the transient beauties consequent upon the changing foliage of the deciduous plants during the seasons of spring and fall, and the flowering of the herbaceous borders and beds during the summer months, the characteristic beauty of the formal garden should be dependent upon the perfection of its design. The formal garden finds an almost perfect correlative in the Grecian temple, the basic beauty of which arises from the perfection of its form and proportions. No doubt the color which was applied to the sculptural work of the Grecian temple added to the richness of its general impression, but its beauty ultimately depended upon the perfection of its form. In the same manner, the beauty of the formal garden is contingent upon its perfection of design, its proportions and the interest arising from its variations of level. Thus the planting system should be arranged in subordination to and as a complement to the design. It should be explanatory of the ground plan, which is the basis of the design. The plants should indicate the varying elevations, and should elevate vertically the main paths and distinguishing divisional alignments, and in every way possible be used as indices to the various important elements of the design. Such an explanatory arrangement of the planting system depends very largely upon the peculiarities of the individual scheme, and yet it may be stated as a general rule, that the plants should increase in height and luxuriance as they approach the boundaries of the garden, and decrease in height and informality as they approach the centre. Thus, the skeleton form of the garden should resemble the general impression of an arena, the central space of which



RAISED SEAT AT THE SIDE OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



PARAPET WALL OF THE BOWLING GREEN OF THE GARDEN OF "WELD."

Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.



SEAT ACROSS THE GREEN FROM THE HOUSE OF "WELD."
Estate of Larz Anderson, Esq., Brookline, Mass.

Chas. A. Platt, Architect.

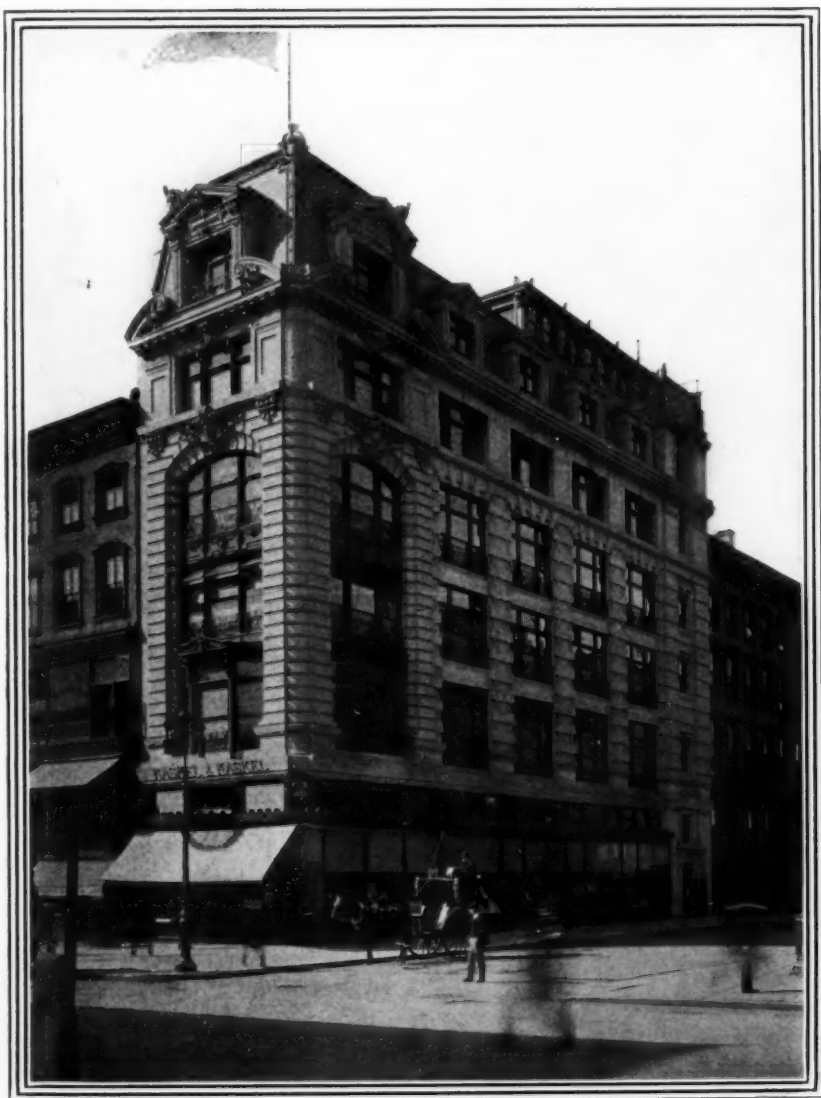
is left in perfect repose, while from there outward, the height and complications increase as they approach the extremities. (Such an illustration is not to be taken too literally, as it is offered only as suggestive of a general principle). Thus, by standing at almost any point within the garden, a general impression of its size and main divisions, and consequently of the relation of the parts to the whole would be obtained.

The fact that the formal garden should be considered as a consolidated whole, dependent for its beauty upon the perfection of its form—rather than upon its details and the transient charms of its foliage, suggests the necessity of determining its ideal size. Obviously, an indefinite extension of its area would completely destroy the harmony which arises from the visual relation of the parts to the whole. The determination of this point has been generally recognized as of importance, and has been variously estimated as extending from five or six to thirty acres, which latter dimension is given by Lord Bacon in his essay "Of Garden," and which is certainly the extreme. Such a discussion is to a large extent of academic interest, and must in actual practice be determined by the exigencies of each case, and yet there can be no question as to the general superiority of a limited area.

As I have mentioned elsewhere, the sharp distinction which Poe draws between the "minor" poems as opposed to the "epic," is perhaps the most illustrative example which can be used in this connection. "By 'minor poems' I mean, of course, poems of little length." He further states, "I hold that a long poem does not exist," and he then proceeds to explain that the perfection of a poem is contingent upon its power to create and sustain in unbroken continuity a single impression or effect. An epic, on the contrary, we are to view, he says, "merely as a series of minor poems," the effect of which upon the reader is, therefore, "a constant alteration of excitement and depression."

Applying this principle to the designing of a formal garden it may be said that there is no such thing as an extensive formal garden; that is, when the garden is of such a magnitude that the rhythm of the relation of the parts to the whole, and of the whole to its parts cannot be visually impressed upon the observer while standing at any advantageous point, it ceases to be one composition and becomes a series of compositions, which finds its correlative in the epic as distinguished from the minor poem.

Geo. F. Pentecost, Jr.



THE KASKEL & KASKEL BUILDING.
No. 316 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

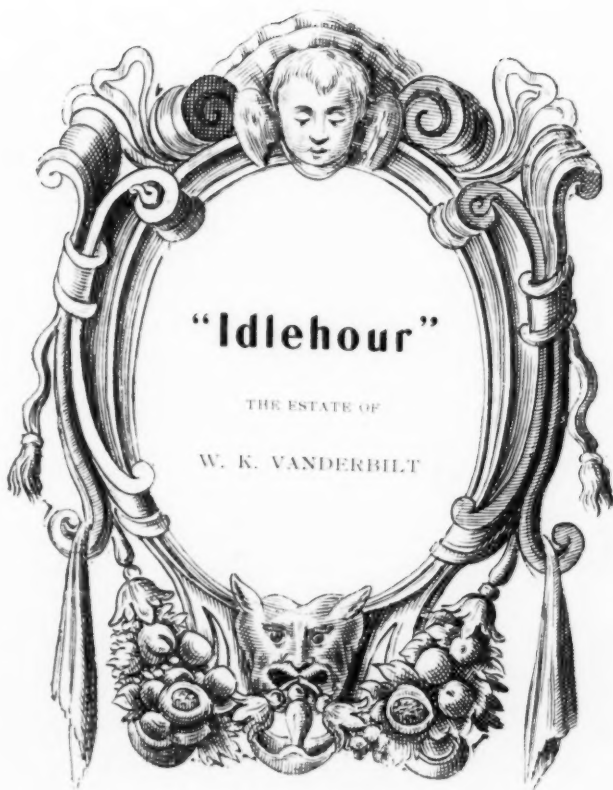
Charles I. Berg, Architect.



THE KNOX BUILDING.

No. 452 Fifth Avenue, New York City.

John H. Duncan, Architect.



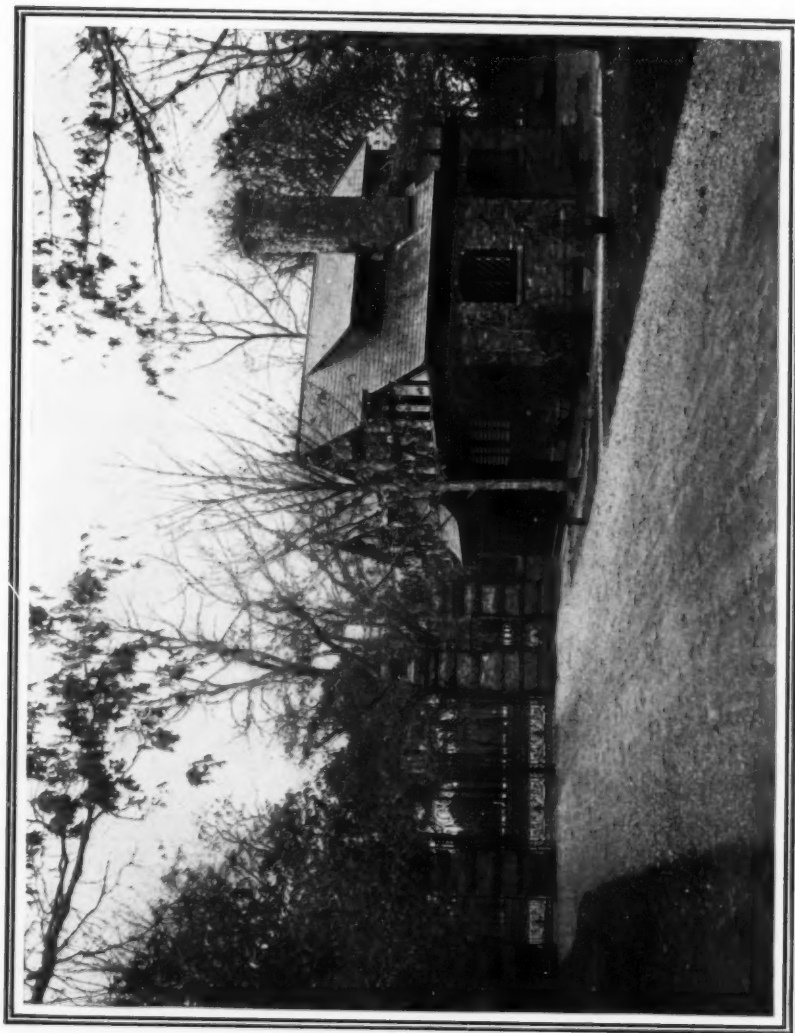


PLATE I. THE LODGE AT "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Morris Hunt, Architect.



"IDLE HOUR."



THE Chinese proverb running to the effect that a truly successful man either builds a house during his lifetime or rears a son, or writes a book, is satisfied usually even as to two of its clauses whenever the American millionaire erects a home for himself. If the book, or its equivalent, is not always forthcoming as well as the house, the deficiency is generally chargeable to a reticence on the part of the owner, which, under existing conditions, is alike excessive whether we regard it as derived from modesty or from hauteur.

It is difficult to deny to the public a legitimate curiosity respecting these private buildings. Indeed, in a sense, are they strictly private? Do they not overtop the individual? The very scale upon which they are produced, the large sums of money spent upon them, the demand they occasion upon the current resources of the arts and crafts invest them with an interest and significance that very properly passes beyond the owner and his immediate personal circle of friends. And, coming closer to the direct concern of this magazine, is it not in the design of these large houses that the American architect finds to-day perhaps the most fortunate opportunity open to him for the exercise of his skill? The big office building or skyscraper is too much involved with utilitarian and other similar considerations to permit a free hand artistically or, even, as one of the profession has stated the case, a free leg to stand on; ecclesiastical work and collegiate work likewise impose very frequently severe financial restrictions; state and municipal building is confounded by politics. In what direction then can the architect look for the amplest play of his art, for the client with the grandiose commission and the plenary dispensation of abundant cash if it is not, in these days as in the days of the high Renaissance, to the millionaire patron about to undertake for himself a home? If an instance is demanded one cannot better illustrate the case than by referring to the Vanderbilt family, who have been extraordinary patrons of the art, building with a princely liberality perhaps unmatched in modern days. It has been suggested even that they have been the most generous patrons the architect has known



PLATE II. THE LARGE STABLE AT "IDLEHOUR"
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

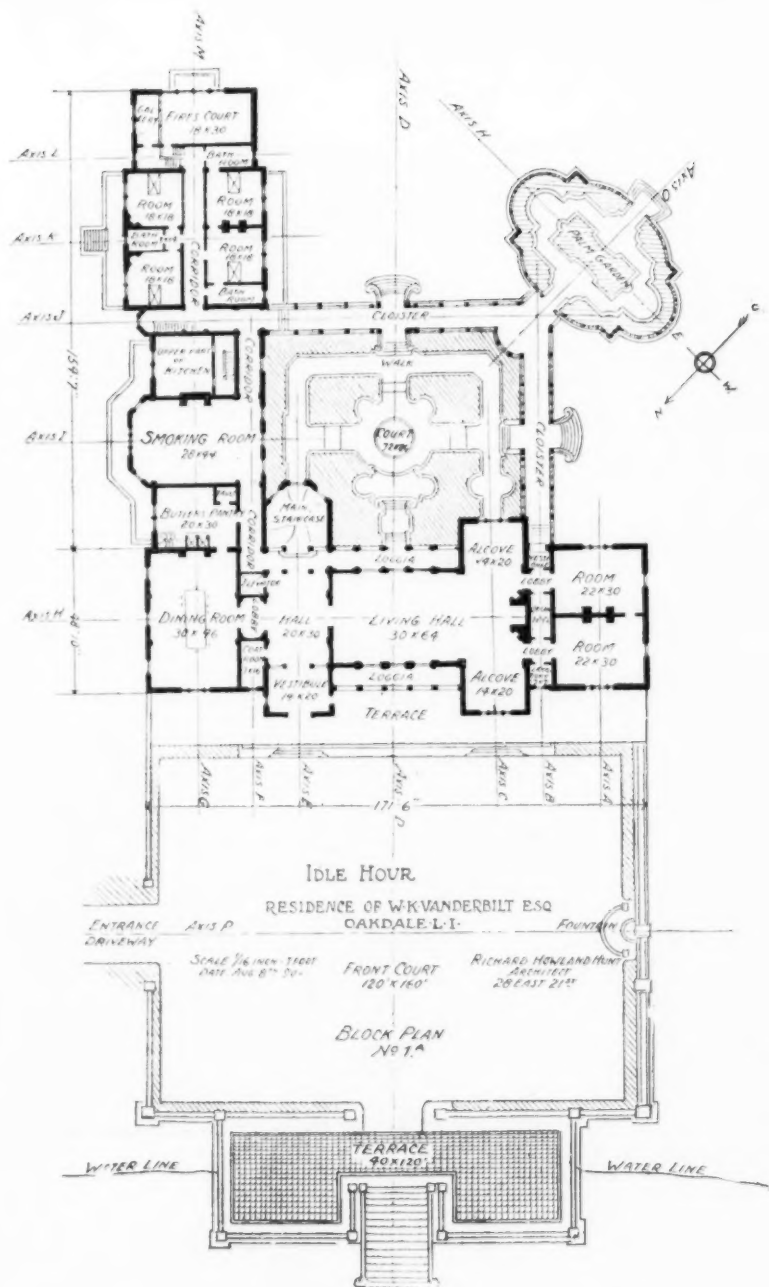


PLATE III. PLAN OF THE RESIDENCE OF "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

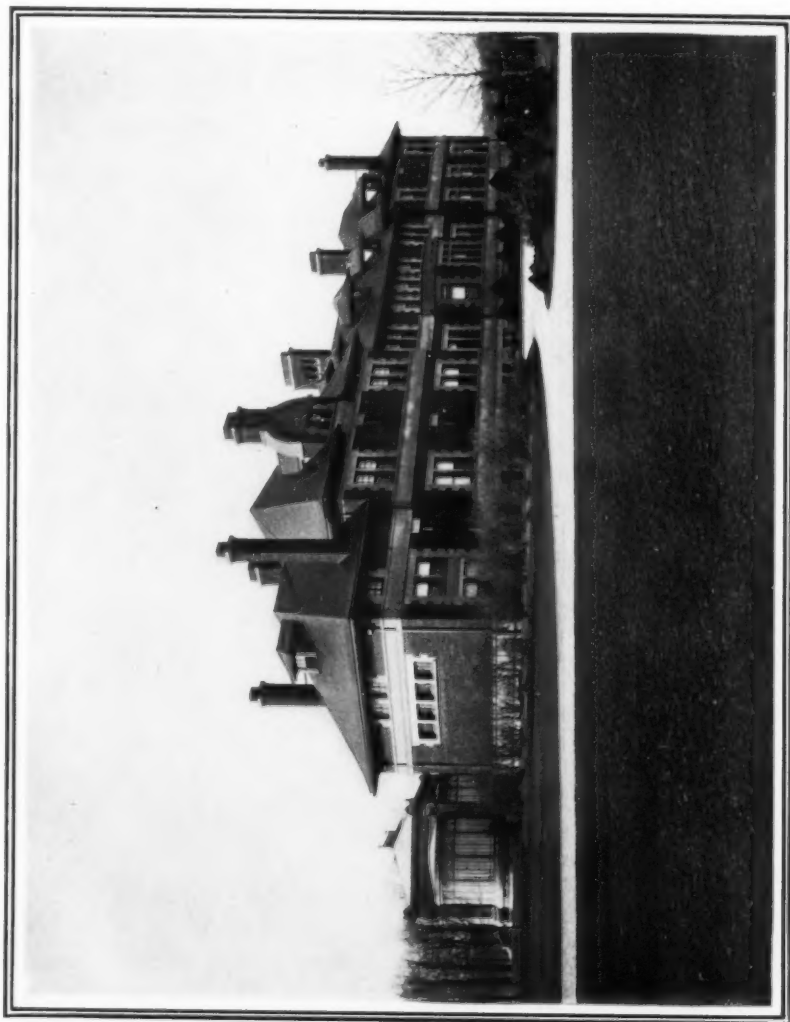


PLATE IV. THE APPROACH TO "IDLEHOUR" FROM THE MAIN DRIVEWAY.
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

since Louis XIV. of exalted memory. That the comparison may be entertained seriously in respect to a single family is significant of the importance to American architecture of the new class of client that has arisen practically within the lifetime of the present generation.

Readers will recall how many pages of the *Architectural Record* have been devoted in recent years to the representation of costly city houses and country places erected not only by the Vanderbilt family, but by the Goulds, the Astors, Messrs. Poor, Whitney, Wetmore, Huntington, Benedict, Bourne, Foster, and others—a register of the great opportunities that have been provided for the American architect by the astonishing increase of wealth in this country, and an indication also for the world at large of the new and interesting development of American social life, which as yet has attained to barely more than its beginning. Nothing comparable to it exists elsewhere in the world. The buildings it has produced (and in the future will demand) are very decidedly differenced from the English country house, their nearest contemporary analogue. They differ even more from the American homes that arose after the war and when prosperity returned to the country. Neither are they at all kindred to those old Colonial houses which added the chief charm to our early social life, the remaining examples of which still retain an indestructible atmosphere of delight. The Squire of the old days or rather his American counterpart in the Southern planter and the New England trader has been replaced by the Merchant Prince, and the homes the latter is now creating, especially along the eastern littoral, may best be likened to those which the merchant princes of Medicean days erected in a manner and with a purpose not entirely dissimilar to the manner and purpose of their undreamt of American successors. These buildings are the registers and, let us hope, enduring chronicles of our very latest days, of our rapidly accumulating wealth, of the prodigious rewards of high finance, and the extraordinary degree of luxury that has become compatible with American life.

The building that has occasioned these remarks is the latest example of the big country place. It is situated at Oakdale, Long Island, surrounded by an estate of about one thousand acres and occupies the site of an older house of the same owner which was destroyed by fire a few years ago. The original building was not palatial, and in replacing it there was no intention to produce a grand abode, the plan being limited strictly to a fireproof country place sufficient for the entertainment of house parties of moderate size. The scale, on account of the proprietor's requirements, was necessarily large, but the sumptuous was not a set part of the plan. Indeed, the owner apparently was inspired by something akin to

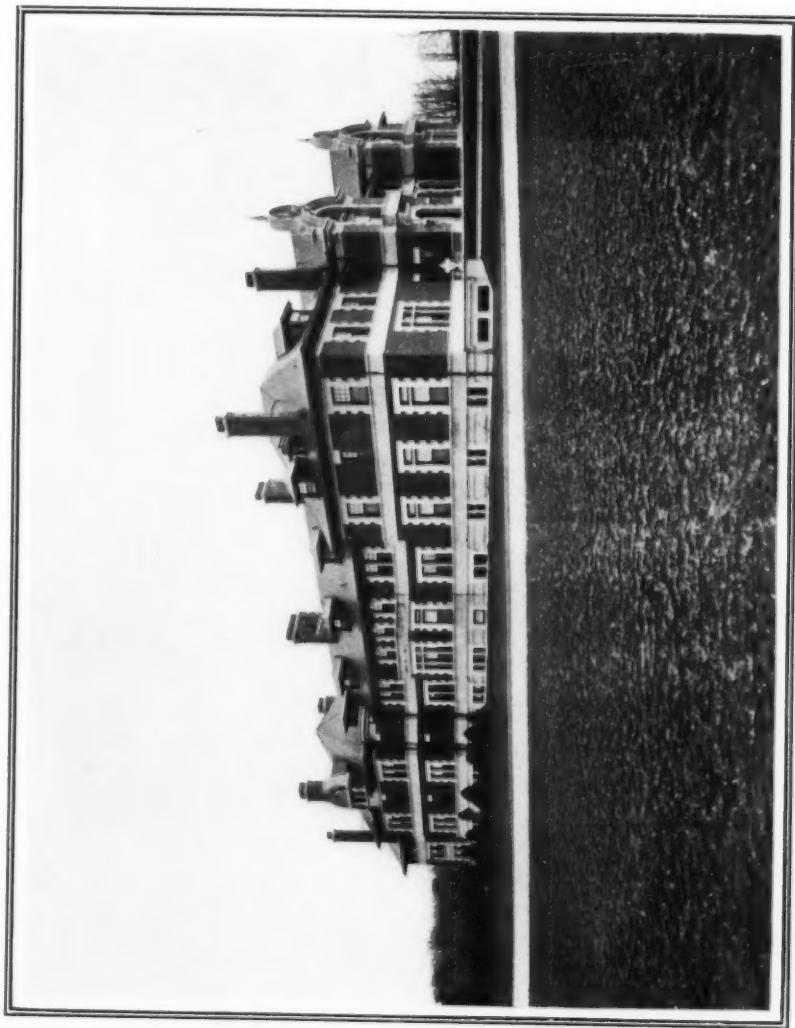


PLATE V. VIEW OF "IDLEHOUR" FROM THE NORTH
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

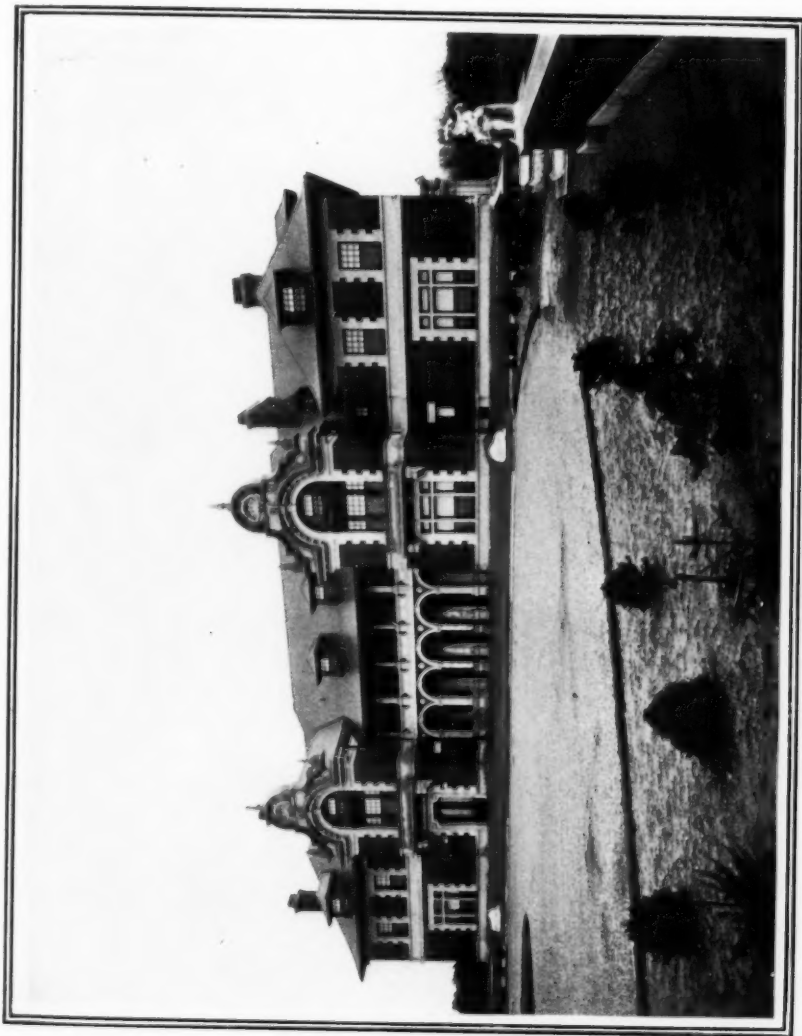


PLATE VI. THE TERRACE AT "IDLEHOUR."

The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

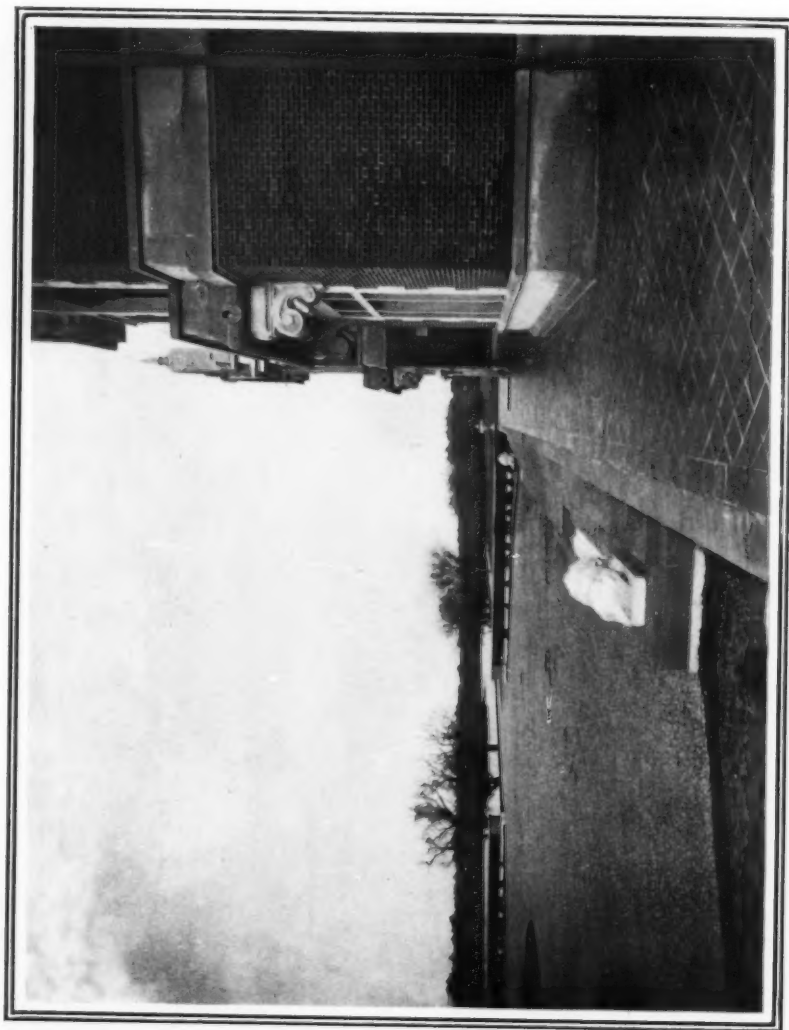


PLATE VII. LOOKING ACROSS THE TERRACE TOWARDS THE RIVER AT "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE VIII. "IDLEHOUR" FROM THE SOUTHWEST.

The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

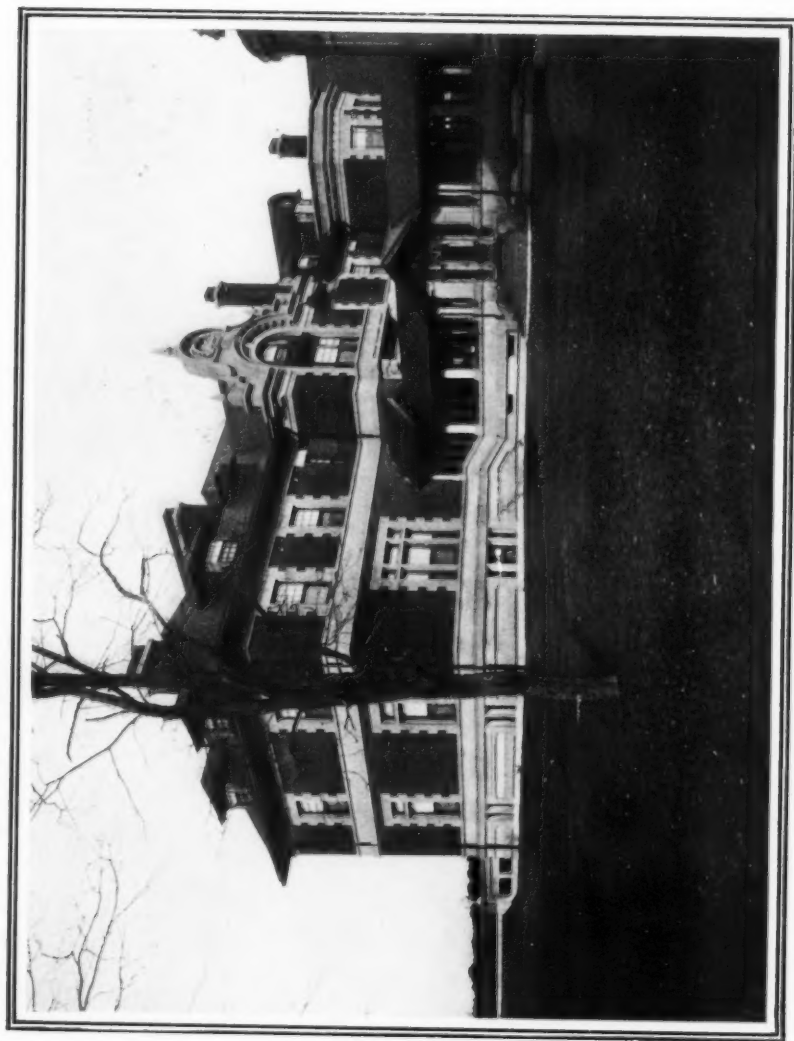


PLATE IX. THE SOUTHERN FAÇADE OF "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

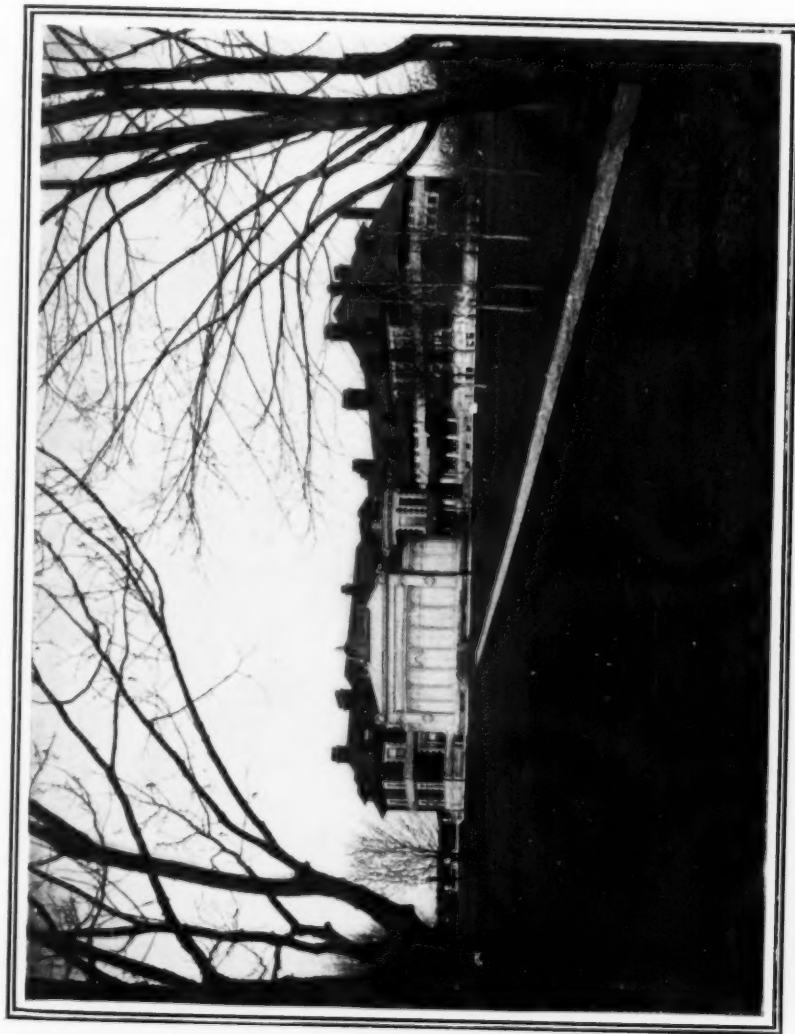


PLATE X. "IDLEHOUR" AS IT LOOKS FROM THE SOUTHEAST.
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

the threat of the English nobelman who declared he would spend a hundred thousand pounds on his house to make it plain. The design must be read in the light of this purpose, and also of the assumption that for a dwelling of this character two principal apartments are the chief requirement—a large homelike assembly or living room, and a large dining-room; all other rooms on the first floor being in the nature of retiring rooms, for reading, writing, smoking, billiards, and so forth. The manner in detail in which the architect has solved the problem may be seen by the ground plan printed herewith (Plate III.). The plan, however, does not disclose the fact that the suites for married couples are placed on the second story of the main body of the house, and the bachelor apartments in the wing, the latter being so situated on account of desirable proximity to the billiard room and the squash court. The plan provides logically and admirably for these requirements, and, as will be seen, "works" well in all its parts. The situation of the big living room and the dining-room on the same axis separated by the large entrance hall, and the placing of the secondary or retiring rooms opening onto subsidiary hallways, has all been arranged in a skillful and effective manner.

With the purpose and plan of the house in mind as indicated, the exterior, too, readily explains itself. After the first general view one feels one cannot be wrong in surmising that the necessity of doing something "homelike" on so large a scale has here hampered the architect. The result, let it be said, is not unsuccessful, yet somehow neither the good nor the bad qualities of it are very positive.

From some points of view the building "composes" admirably, the design nowhere is really restless in line (and these are not common virtues), yet there is confusion of a vague kind which finally throws the beholder upon his own resources for explanation --the building going so near to satisfying the demands of its own logic, without at the same time quite convincing the spectator. Perhaps the explanation is to be found in the owner's stipulation for the "homelike" coupled to the architect's rejection of a "homelike" style. Many things are translatable into French, the purest Parisian of the latest mode if you like, but the "homelike," and particularly the homelike on a large scale, is certainly not one of them. How excellent the French of the architect of "Idlehour" may be has been demonstrated in buildings which are idiomatic, polished and delightful, and which we all know and admire, but in the case before us is it not the language quite as much as the linguist that has defaulted? The building and its designer were clearly at odds, and if we might push this verbal absurdity a step further, we would be compelled to admit that of the two the building had the better judg-

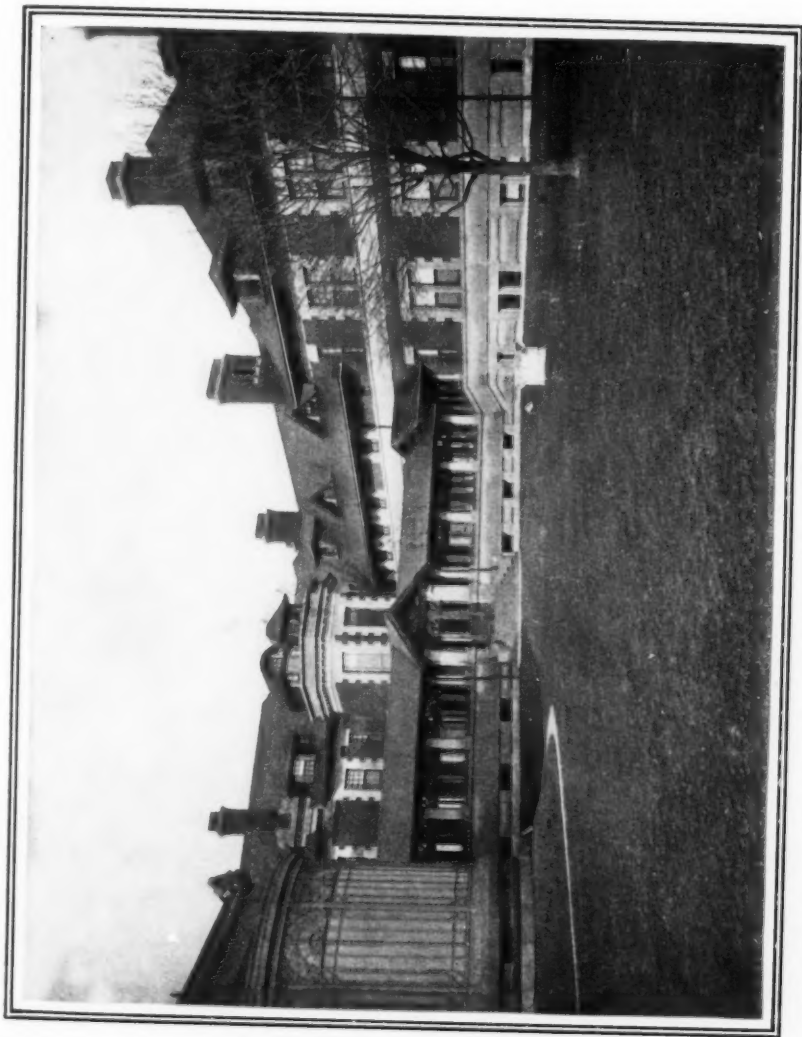


PLATE XI. THE CLOISTER CONNECTING THE PALM GARDEN WITH THE MAIN BUILDING.
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

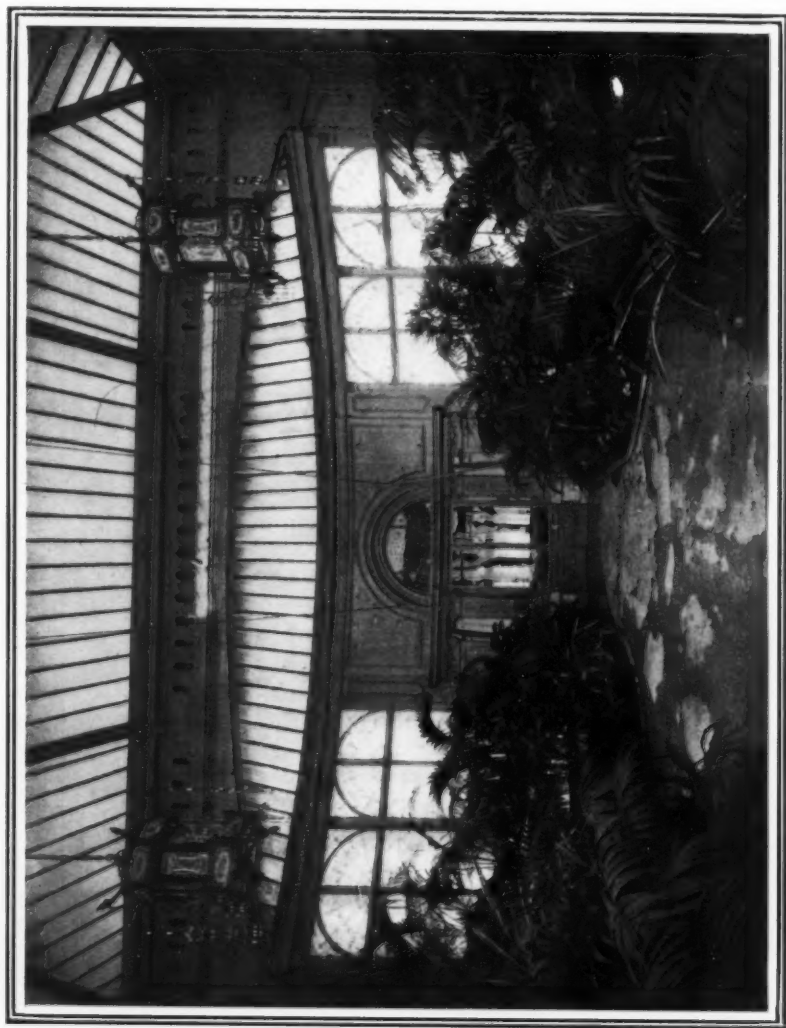


PLATE XII. THE PALM GARDEN AT "IDLEHOUR."

The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

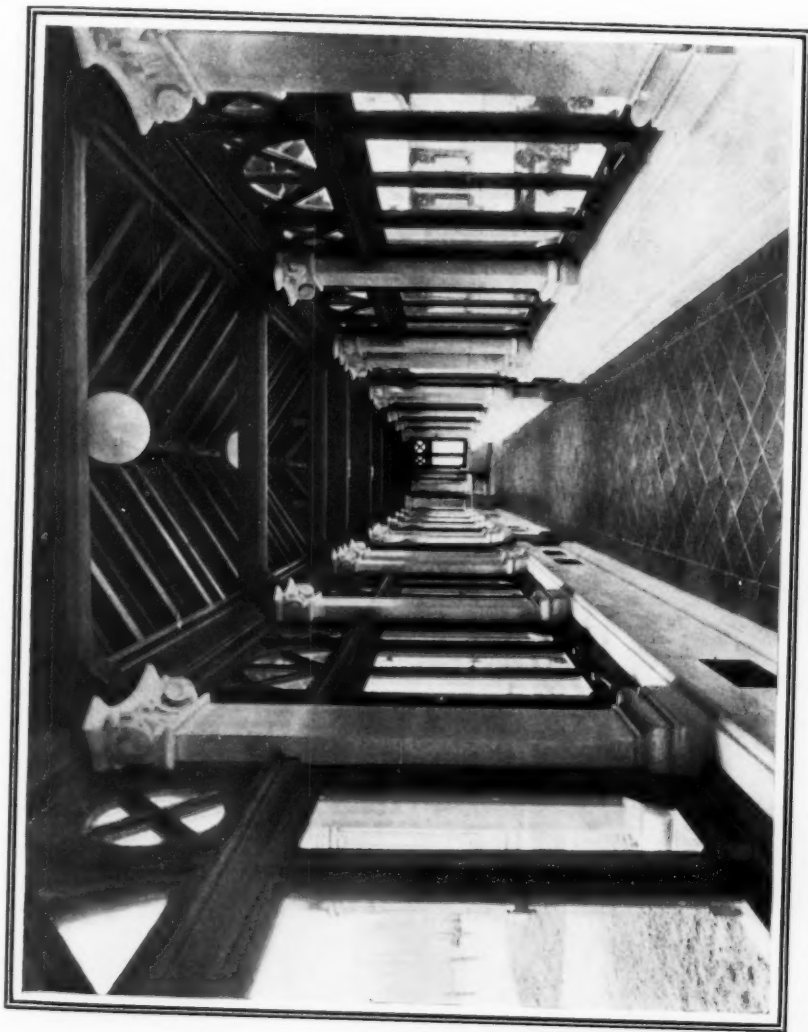


PLATE XIII. INTERIOR OF THE CLOISTER AT "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

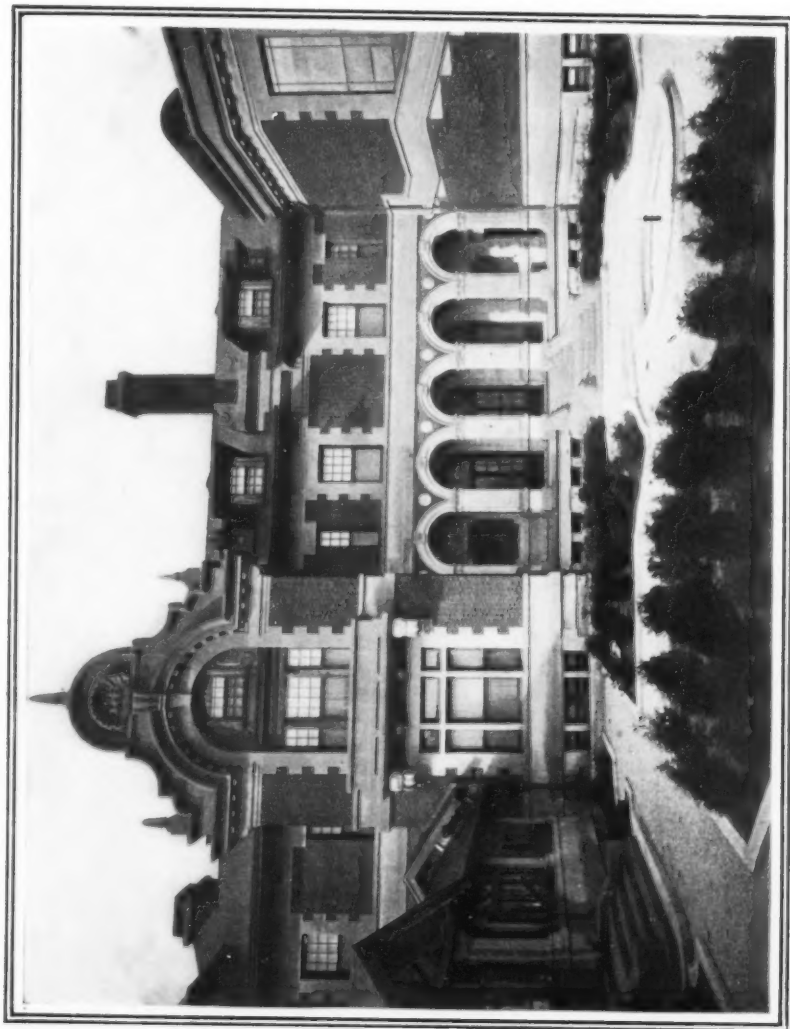


PLATE XIV. THE COURT AT "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

ment. For, the building says "Jacobean" where the architect says "Modern French," and, though the handwriting remains the architect's, the sense of the result is the building's. Superficially it is French, French even by virtue of many admirable and strictly Gallic qualities; nevertheless we cannot be robbed of the idea that the original of the building lay somewhere across the Channel, although not to be found there. The total expression of the building is English, and if the gables or fractables, the arcade of the entrance, the chimnies, the symmetrical diversity of the parts, the color and proportions of the building all suggest the Jacobean manner, the suggestion is admittedly the vaguest hint, but a hint nevertheless which is strong enough to divorce the structure from its expressed style and to throw it back into an adnubrious classification with English domestic architecture of earlier days.

One is tempted to ask a question such as this that follows with a building such as this before us: Given a definite artistic problem, is there really very much that is fortuitous in the expression of it? And if this question may not be answered offhand, does it not hasten to suggest immediately this further enquiry as a corollary—and therefore does not an architect, even by the very "departures" in his work clearly demonstrate how essentially false are the objections we hear at times to keeping a firm grasp upon the traditions? The Greek temple, the Gothic cathedral are not only expressions of the Greek and the Mediæval mind, but they are universal expressions also, to which perforce men must return again and again whenever they have anything similar to say. And just as the principles of mathematics would be discovered and rediscovered by the human mind if forced repeatedly to like solutions, so in a sense, in a greatly limited and qualified sense, no doubt, may we not assert a universal element in all real architectural work to which designers, even without a conscious effort, will inevitably return, drawn by their problem in proportion to its kinship with the solutions arrived at in the past. In this manner the too great "historical dependence," with which American architects are often accused, may be closer than we think to a lively appreciation of "immediate" facts. The modern and special conditions of a house like "Idlehour" undoubtedly demand their own expression, but the conditions are not all modern or special, and therein lies both the perennial validity of past achievement, and also the justification for reasonable departure from it. Hence, perhaps, in some such manner as this we may arrive at an explanation of how it is that a careful piece of work in a French style by an undoubted master of the French mode turns out to be something which in its "galbe" or essential character is not French. And don't let us overlook the fact that for the architect to have reached this point is an infinitely



PLATE XV. THE VESTIBULE AT "IDLEHOUR."
The Estate of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XVI. THE ENTRANCE HALL AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

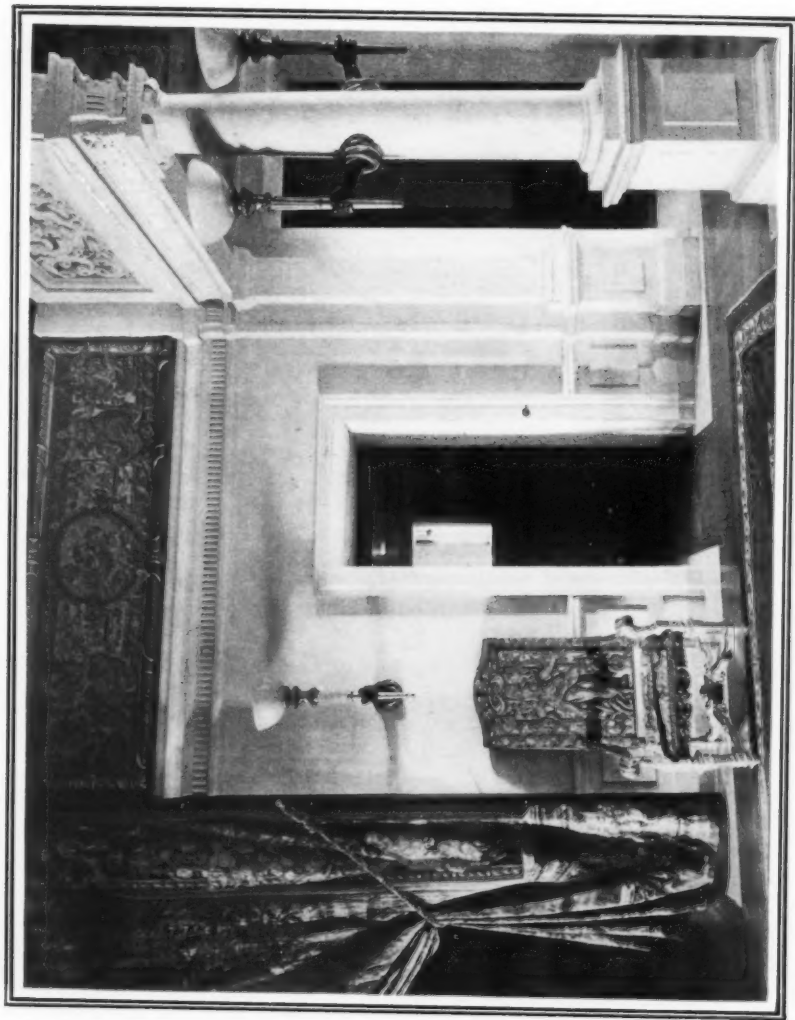


PLATE XVII. DETAIL OF ENTRANCE HALL AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

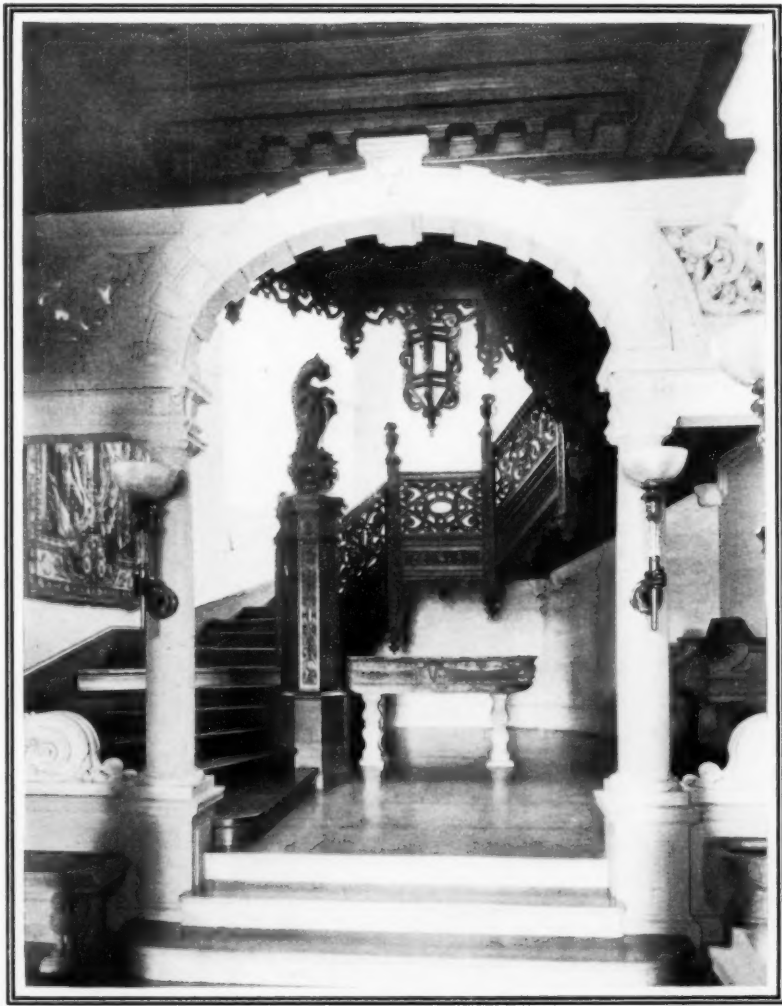


PLATE XVIII. THE MAIN STAIRWAY AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XIX. THE STAIRWAY AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XX. THE STAIRWAY AT "IDLEHOUR."

Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

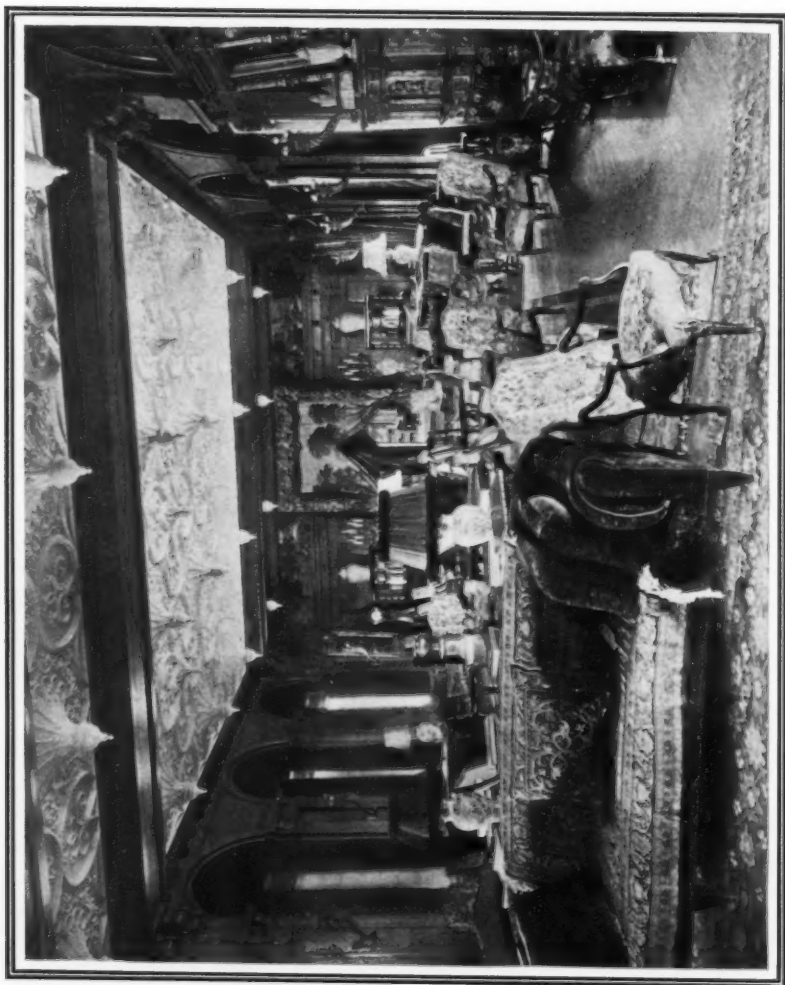


PLATE XXI. THE LIVING HALL AT "IDLEHOUR."

Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XXII. THE LIVING HALL AT "IDLEHOUR,"
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XXIII. THE FIREPLACE AND ORGAN OF THE LIVING HALL AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

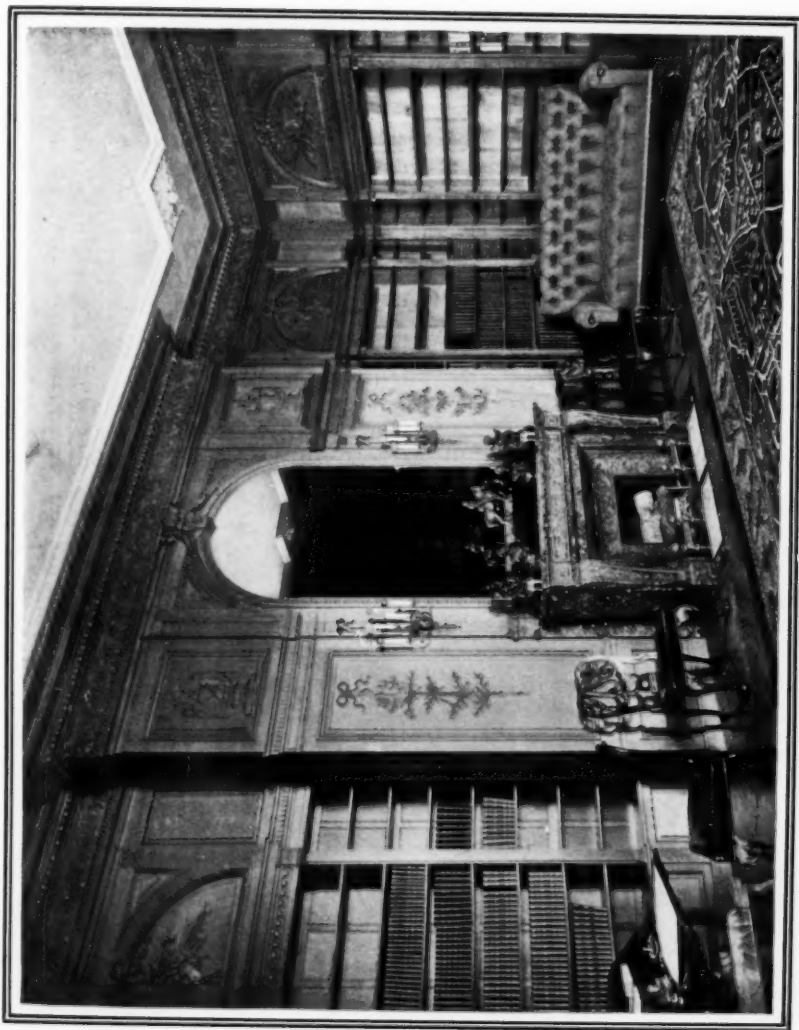


PLATE XXIV. THE LIBRARY AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.

Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

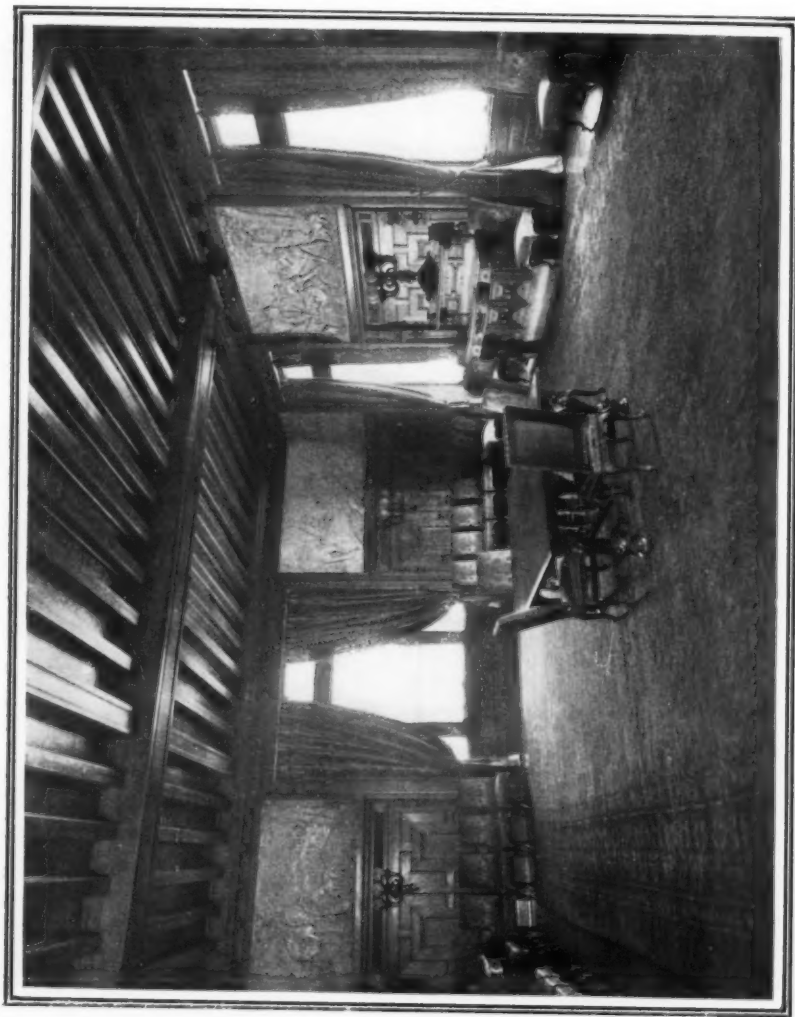


PLATE XXIV. THE DINING-ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."

Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

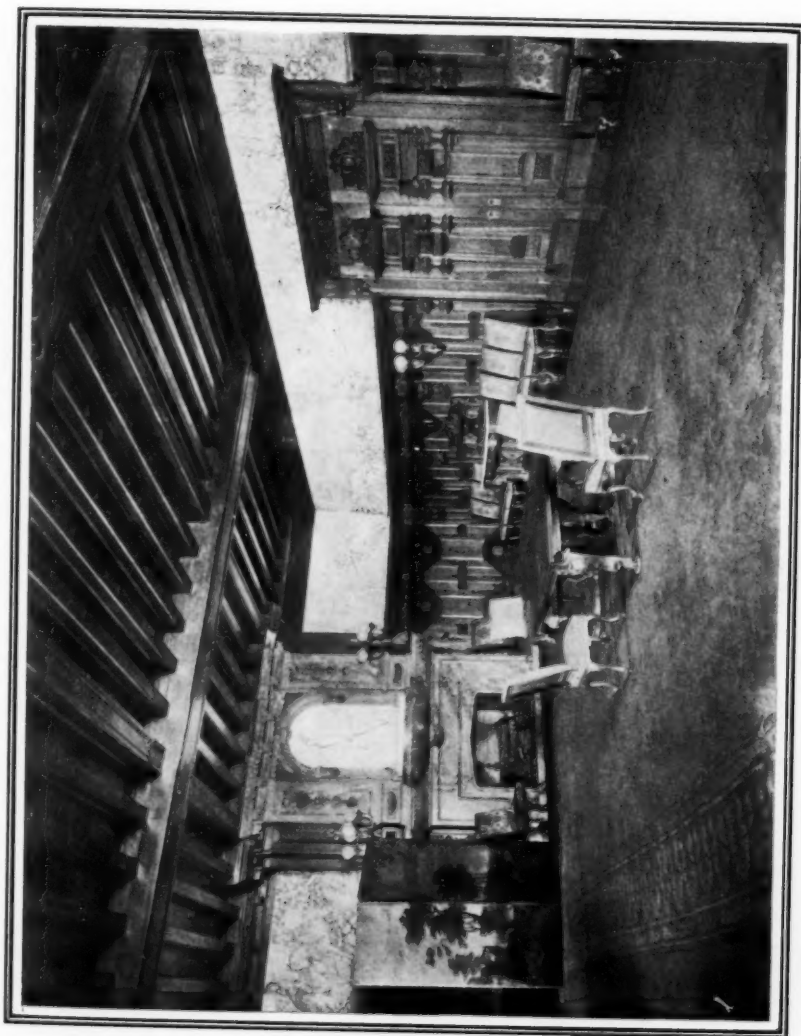


PLATE XXV. THE DINING-ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



PLATE XXVI. MANTELPiece IN THE DINING-ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

greater achievement than to have "reproduced" the finest structure in the world. It is evidence of the acquisition of a true handwriting, true to the facts, and capable of granting them even an unpremeditated expression. And this is an indication of high architectural capacity.

We cannot pass from a consideration of the exterior of the house without a word regarding the interior court (Plate XIV.), which is not only one of the best things in the design, but also is one of the happiest productions to be found in recent domestic architecture. Here the author's predilection for the French manner serves him admirably, and one has hardly a fault to find with the result.

The real success of the building, however, is furnished by the interiors. These are represented in our pictures as well as "black and white" permits. It must be remembered, however, that no small part of the total effect of these rooms is lost in consequence of the omission of color. Looking at these photographs the reader can scarcely fail to notice how much closer the architect has leaned in his interiors towards English domestic architecture than he ventured to permit himself to do in dealing with the exterior. No doubt here we still have much which, if we must classify, is French, but we have still more that is English, and it is all handled so freely and ably that one cannot help regretting that the architect did not more completely commit himself to the style in which fundamentally he was working. Take, for instance, the big entrance hall. It is an excellent piece of work, simple, dignified and of good proportions. It is constructed of limestone; the woodwork is of oak, a combination, by the way, that makes a very excellent setting for the rich multi-colored tapestries and hangings. The detail up to the arcade is French and modern, but the staircase and its appurtenances are of a much more distant date. The wood carving of the newel posts and balustrade, all very delightful, is frankly Jacobean. And the total result? Is it not picturesque and highly admirable? (see Plates XV., XVI., XVII., XVIII., XIX., XX.).

The best of the interiors, however, is the dining-room (Plates XXIV., XXV.) We say this with hesitation, because we feel how difficult it would be to decide the question if some one were to claim first place for the smoking room (Plates XXVII., XXVIII., XXIX., XXX), with its delightful Gothic screen. Certainly these two apartments are the best of the kind that have been produced in a great many years. We know of nothing better in contemporary American work. They are very "gentlemanly" productions, refined and elegant in character, and rich to a degree, without the slightest trace of ostentation. We are sorry we cannot produce the colors, particularly of the dining-

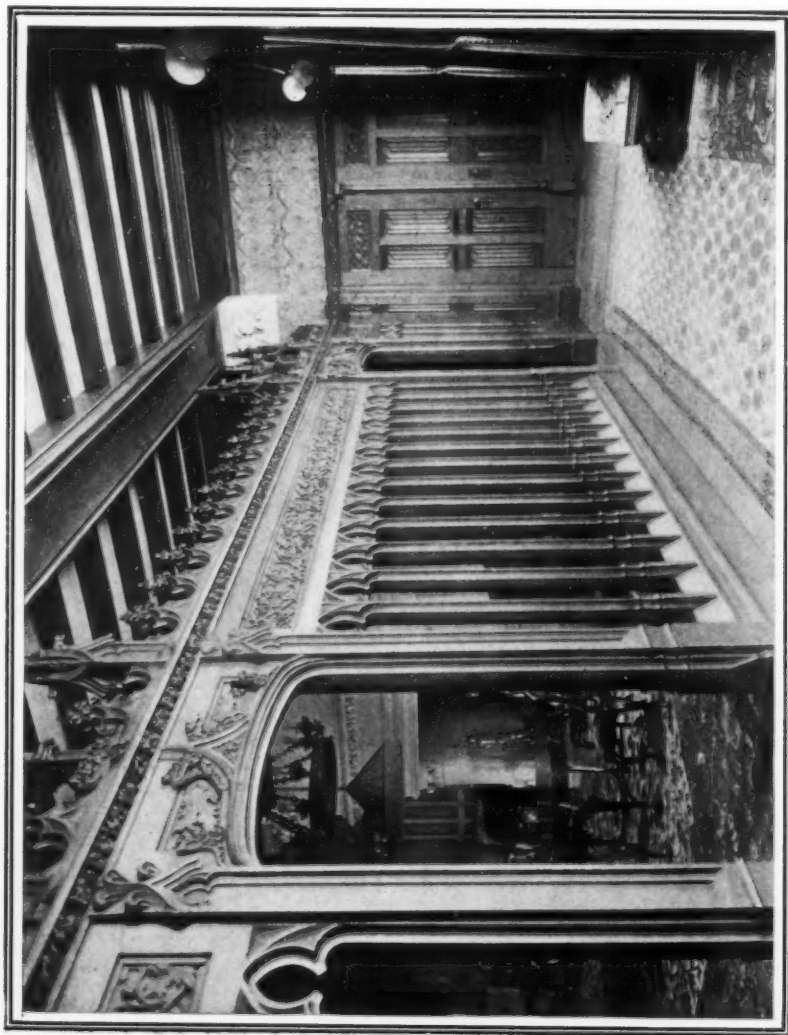


PLATE XXVII. CORRIDOR LEADING TO THE SMOKING ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

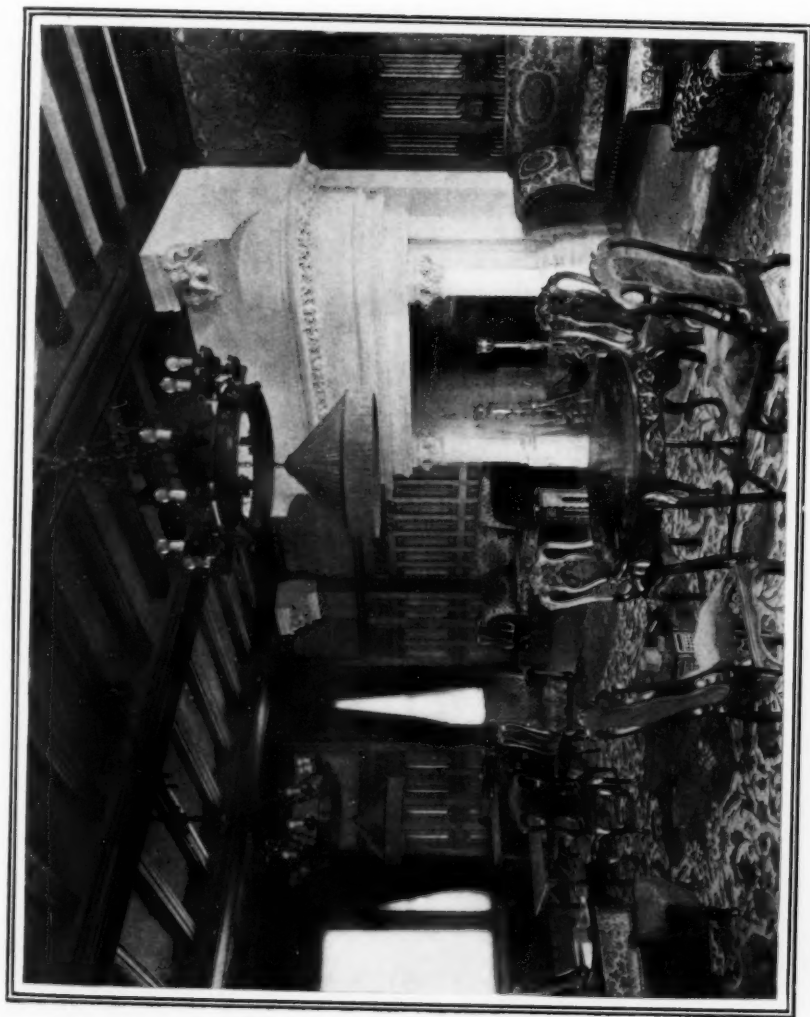


PLATE XXVIII. SMOKING ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I.
Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

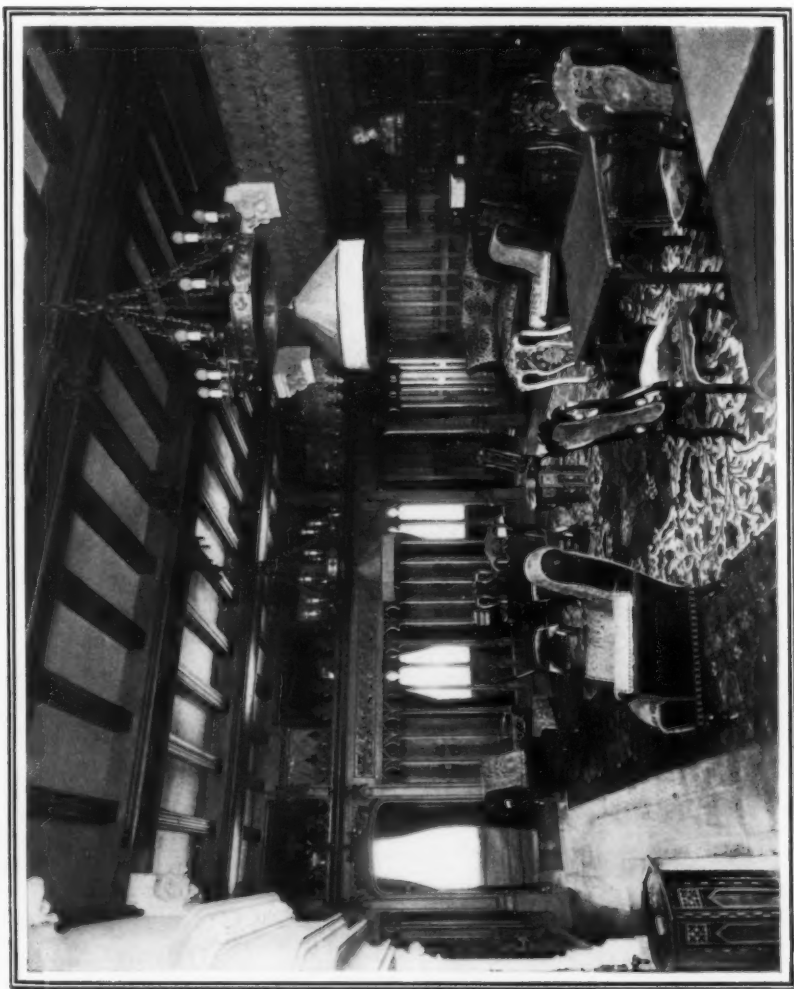


PLATE XXIX. SMOKING ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.



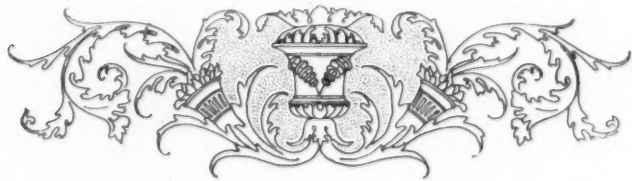
PLATE XXX. MANTELPiece IN THE SMOKING ROOM AT "IDLEHOUR."

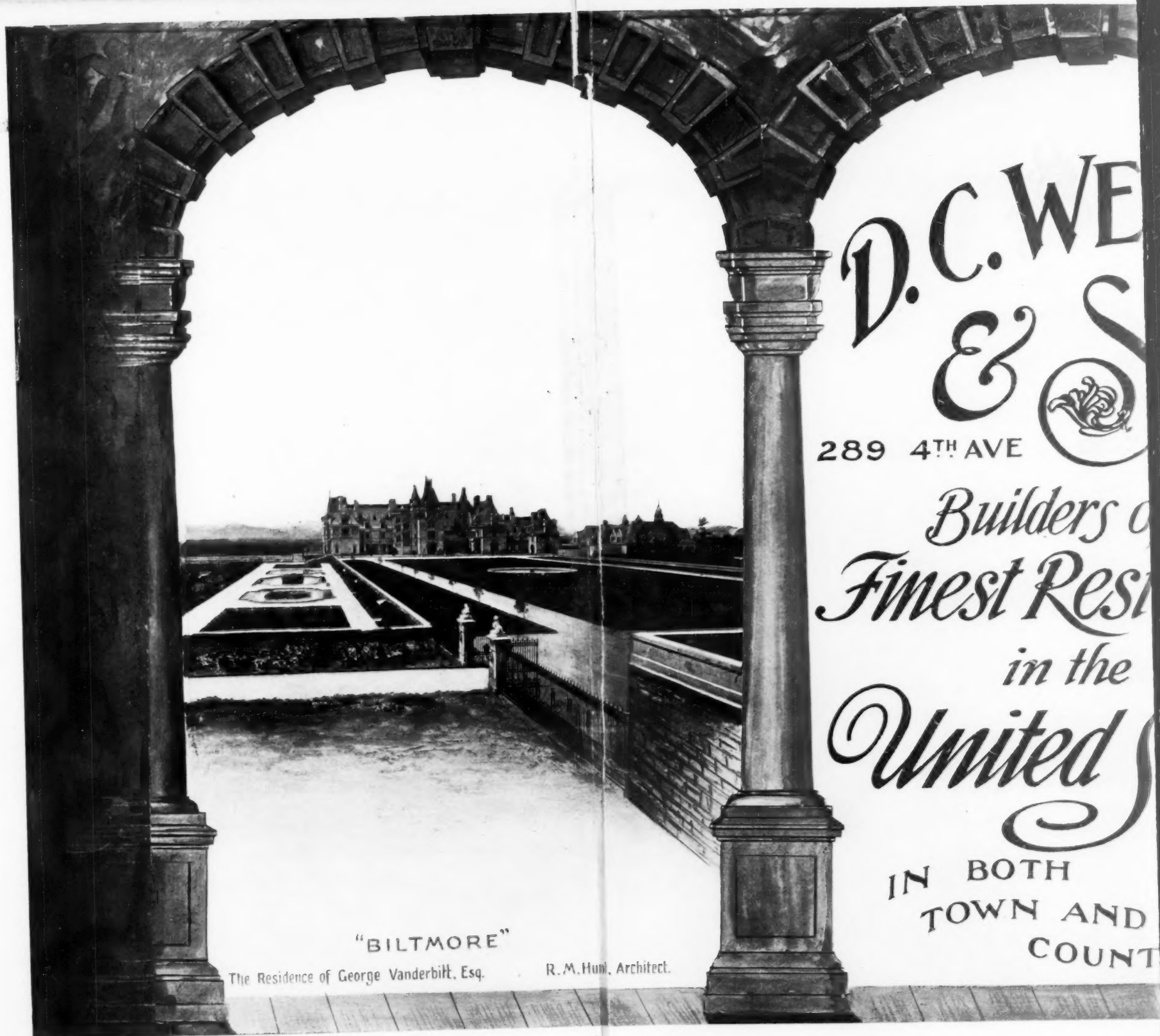
Residence of W. K. Vanderbilt, Esq., at Oakdale, L. I. Richard Howland Hunt, Architect.

room. The prevailing tones of this room are brown and green. The woodwork and ceiling are of oak and the carved frieze by Karl Bitter is of old ivory color. The hangings are green. The stone mantelpiece also is green, with the exception of the figure of Diana by the same sculptor, the stark whiteness of which is much out of key. The simple richness of the room and the admirable care that has been bestowed upon the details deserve very high commendation. There is absolutely nothing out of place in the design.

The success of the smoking-room is in a sense of a higher order. Here we have mediæval forms used for modern purposes with a skill that is extremely rare, and the spirit of the style is retained with almost a native firmness of grasp throughout all its modifications for twentieth century uses. How much better this method of procedure is than to import portions of an antique building as we see so often done and incorporate them into a modern apartment, the details of which cannot possibly be brought into concert with them, partly because the antique article needs an antique setting, and also because modern workmanship bears its own stamp, and may be more easily pieced with older craftsmanship than harmonized with it! The great hall (Plates XXI., XXII., XXIII.), with its elaborate stalactite ceiling and organ fireplace, is the most elaborate apartment in the house, but it lacks the architectural interest that belongs to both the dining-room and the smoking-room. The effect is rich, or, as the phrase is, "stunning," and yet a homelike quality has been retained, but in rooms of this character the upholsterer is perhaps necessarily more in evidence than the architect. The apartment is of magnificent dimensions, and when one thinks of what the modern decorator is frequently allowed to "do" with a room of this character it seems impossible to rate too highly the reserve and discretion of both owner and architect.

Indeed this admirable reserve and discretion is perhaps the dominating virtue of "Idlehour." Here we have the quality of the place and highly excellent as the architecture is, this freedom from ostentation and the earmarks of a "show place" is perhaps something even more admirable than the good architecture. Architecturally "Idlehour" was intended to be a home, and despite the money spent upon it; that is what it is.





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R. M. Hunt, Architect.

A decorative archway made of stone or brick, supported by two large, ornate columns. The arch is the central frame for the text.

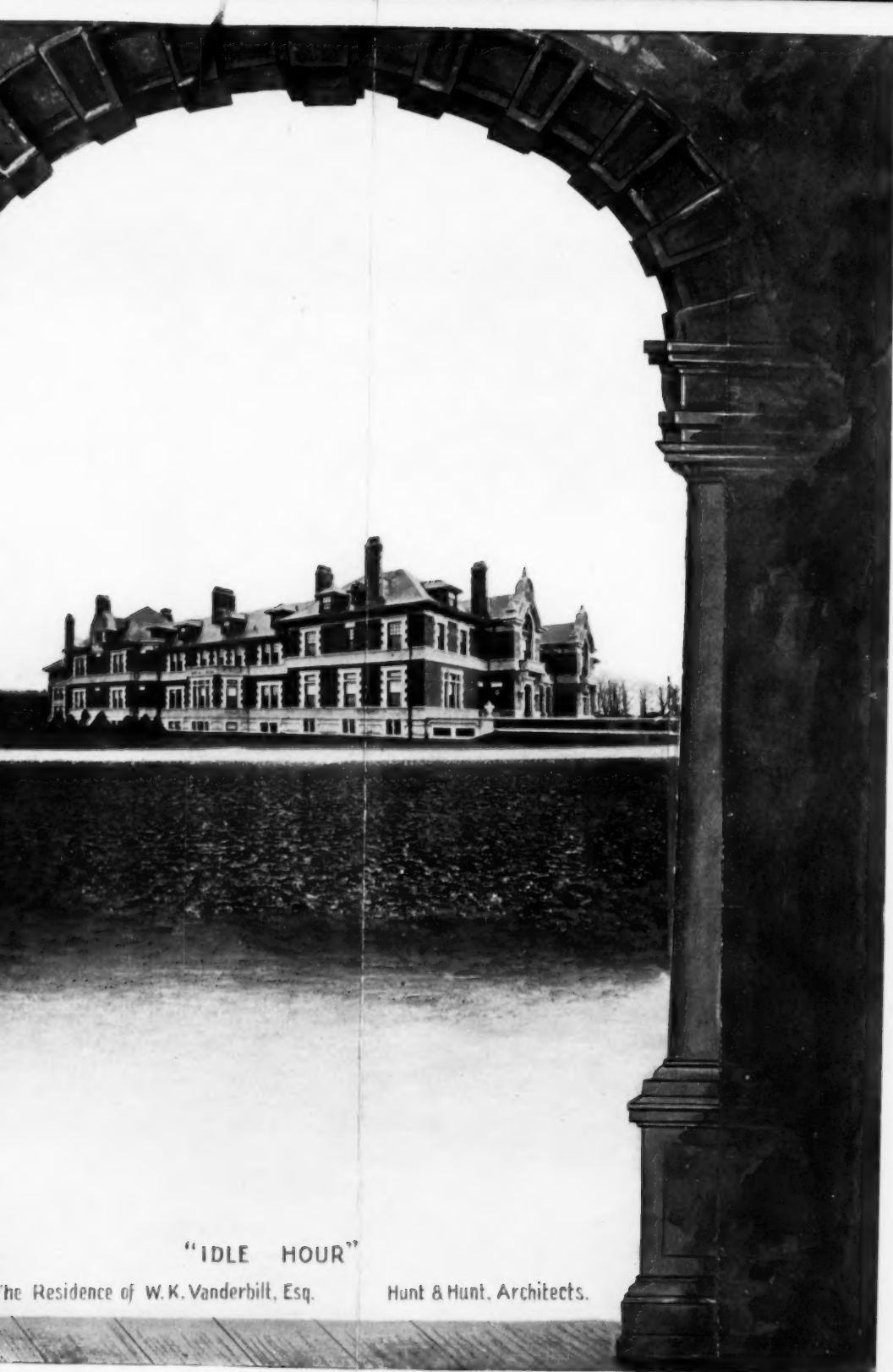
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